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## THE PRIMACY OF FAITH



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# THE PRIMACY OF FAITH

*by*  
RICHARD KRONER

*New York*  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1943

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*First printing.*

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS  
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY

*To*

MICHAEL B. FOSTER M.A. (OXON.), PH.D. (KIEL)

TUTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD



## Preface

THE FOLLOWING Gifford Lectures were delivered at the University of St. Andrews in the academic year 1939-1940, not exactly in the form as they are published now but with the same content. I have enlarged their scope of thought in some respects, and I have omitted some parts of the lectures as delivered.

Circumstances, not connected with the lectures themselves, have delayed publication. This delay certainly has some disadvantages, since my inner development has proceeded in the meantime. It has, I trust, proceeded along the lines which I was then pursuing. The delay has also one advantage: I have had the occasion to work out some theses suggested in the lectures and to discourse about them in the United States. Thus two other courses of lectures amplify and interpret the program that I outlined at St. Andrews: The Bedell Lectures on *The Religious Function of Imagination*,<sup>1</sup> and the Hewett Lectures on *How Do We Know God?*<sup>2</sup> Together with these they form a kind of trilogy that might be entitled: *The Boundary Line between Philosophy and Religion*. This was the original title of the Gifford Lectures.

In the Bedell Lectures I dealt with the problem of religious imagination, a problem too long neglected, I think; in the Hewett lectures I discussed the problem of religious knowledge, a very intricate problem, because religious knowledge deviates so obviously from all other kinds of knowledge that even the question might be raised

<sup>1</sup> Published 1941 by Yale University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Published 1943 by Harper and Brothers.

as to whether we are allowed to speak of knowledge at all; in the following lectures the problem of faith is in the foreground, but the problems of religious imagination and religious knowledge also are discussed. Indeed, *faith*, *imagination* and *knowledge* are so intimately combined in the spiritual field that it is not easy to distinguish them. They are elements within one and the same living unity.

The standpoint of the following treatise may be outlined in advance. I try to show that a natural theology cannot be prohibited by dogmatics as Karl Barth would have it; but also that a merely rational faith, as provided by Kant, is not tenable. Reason needs the supplement of revealed religion. In such a way thought and faith do not contradict, but rather complement each other. In this relationship faith has the primacy. It surpasses the power of reason and completes its undertaking.

I might call this standpoint a modern conservatism. It does not inaugurate a new orthodoxy, but it shows the legitimate right of a super-natural and even super-rational faith—of that faith which was and is and I trust will ever be the basis and the source of our life.

The tendency towards the humanization of religion is passing; it led finally to the dehumanization of man, and thus it refuted itself. Faith should neither be orthodox nor heterodox; it should not be dogmatic at all. It should be universal and individual at the same time, preserving the ancient message but also reconciling it with the thinking mind of today.

I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the Administration of the Gifford Foundation. The image of beautiful St. Andrews, the memories of many friendly hours I enjoyed in the hospitable house of Professor Knox and his wife, and the echo of many conversations and discussions with the colleagues in the University, all this is



still alive in me and will remain alive as long as I live. I also wish to thank Professor Monroe C. Beardsley of Yale University and the Reverend Dudley D. Zuver, who kindly revised the English of my manuscript.

R. K.

New York, January, 1943



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## THE PRIMACY OF FAITH



## CHAPTER I

### *Biblical and Natural Theology*

THE BIBLE shows us, with overwhelming power, that the nature of God is deeply hidden and that reason alone cannot disclose the divine mystery. Even to a man who cannot share the belief of the church or its dogmatic theology the language of the Bible attests that truth with convincing clarity. God is a hidden God. Thus the third commandment warns against abusing His holy name. We are forbidden to mention His name in a way that would lead us to believe we know His nature, or have dispelled the mystery that covers it. We should never forget that we are speaking of His mystery when we are speaking of Him, for He is His mystery.

He who does not recognize this nature of God, may be learned, but he is more remote from the knowledge of God than the simple believer. Partial knowledge has robbed him of the capacity for religious awe. Actually those who deny God pretend to greater knowledge than the believer. To the believer the fundamental fact is the vast enigma of things divine. This fact makes him humble, and humility is the precondition and prerequisite of faith. Because God is a mystery we are forbidden to use His name in vain, which is to allege that we know His nature as we know the nature of other things. God is mystery; this is implied in the attribute of holiness. A thing fully understandable cannot be holy, though of course a certain acquaintance is presupposed in calling God holy. But His holiness cannot be ascertained and tested in the way of

empirical things, their properties and their modes of existence. His holiness is beyond empirical experience, beyond empirical comprehension. God is beyond human capacity altogether.

All reports about the Highest, therefore, are veiled, always hinting at something that can never be disclosed and reported. Revelation does not remove this veil; on the contrary it reveals the inaccessibility, the transcendence, the majesty of the Lord. Accordingly the Bible uses an indirect form of speech when the Supreme Being is introduced. Its language becomes imaginative. Symbolic and parabolic expressions, metaphors and figurative style suggest what cannot be said in plain, literal fashion. Mysticism pervades the whole Scripture. There is an insuperable barrier between man and God. Man is not able to understand fully the purpose and action of the Creator. And His unfathomable character extends to His creation. We do not fully understand the work of His hands and His spirit; they are and remain for all time wondrous. Even man himself, if we look at him as a creature of God, assumes this marvellous character. We cannot fully understand ourselves, we are included in the universal mystery of all being. This is the impression wrought by the Bible, and it agrees with man's deepest feeling. The enduring influence and appeal of this book rests upon the agreement between the thing written and the reader.

The language of Scripture seems childish, as compared with the language of modern science and philosophy. It pertains to the mystery of things divine and only such language can reveal the truth about them. The apostles of modern science who boast of the exactitude, the certainty and efficiency of their knowledge, are mistaken if they look contemptuously upon the primitive simplicity of the oldest book. This book is more profound than science



admits it to be, more profound than science can possibly be itself. This point of view, axiomatic in former generations, we must now recapture. It is not a deficiency that makes the Biblical language appear immature compared with that of science; this contrast stems from the difference between the entire purport and intention of religion and science. The scientist who thinks his own outlook superior to the Biblical shows only that he does not understand the essence of faith.

Whereas science tries to discover the way in which nature operates, religion appeals to the consciousness of the mystery that underlies nature and human life. Science and religion, from this point of view, are strictly opposed to each other. Science endeavors to diminish the realm of the unknown, religion stresses the fact that there is an unknowable; that even the smallest and most unimportant thing is ultimately unknowable. Everything is embraced in universal mystery: the lowest and the highest, matter as well as mind, soul and spirit. This aspect of unknowability, of course, pertains only to one side of religion. There is another side also. Religion does not offer knowledge in the sense of scientific knowledge, but it does open an access to the unknowable and it does even offer a certain knowledge of the all-embracing mystery: it teaches us to meet it with awe, with confidence, with hope, love and faith. The Bible thus addresses man not as an isolated intellect, but as a total personality possessing a moral will and centered in a feeling heart. Appealing to emotion and volition, it necessarily appeals to reason and intellect also, for the heart and will are human precisely because they are connected with, and influenced by, intellectual faculties. Thus the Scripture gives reasons for belief in God, and provides us with a kind of knowledge. But this knowledge is neither scientific nor philosophic, strictly speaking;

it is not conceptual and not rational. Rather it is imaginative. Compare the style of Biblical writers, even of those who are involved in theological thought like Paul, with the style of scientific works, be they demonstrative or predominantly descriptive, be they rational or empirical, critical or speculative. And the difference of style hints at a difference of purpose and purport. Religious knowledge is not disinterested, it intends no objective truth; on the contrary it stirs our conscience and touches our heart. This is the reason it is legitimately imaginative, not only occasionally using figurative speech or poetical metaphor, but rather imbued with imaginative elements in all its conceptions, in all its ideas, even and especially in the idea of God. Religion and science need not interfere with each other. Their realms are wholly different. Science can never produce images in the religious sense, religion can never produce concepts instrumental in science and theoretical knowledge. Religion cannot supersede scientific investigation, but science also cannot replace religious imagination. A sharp boundary line divides these realms.

In spite of this acknowledged difference of interest, intention, and method, these varieties of knowledge do not dwell in peace together. On the contrary a struggle has raged between them since the beginning of Greek thought. In ancient times intellectual thought seemed to have overcome religious knowledge as represented by polytheistic belief in the mythical gods. Greek philosophy held more or less in contempt the images of the gods and strove to supplant them by abstract knowledge. Aristotle was convinced that his theological insight was much more adequate to the nature of the divine than the religious belief of his fellow countrymen. He was convinced that rational thought was able to penetrate the essence of things, and therefore the essence of the divine also. The mythical

form of religious knowledge, he says, is fit for "the persuasion of the multitude and for legal and utilitarian expediency."<sup>1</sup> According to him the true knowledge of God is to be achieved by metaphysical inquiry and discourse. Aristotle became thus the founder of "natural theology."

Greek thought preceded and initiated Christian theology. This historical fact proves that the human mind can find a certain kind of knowledge of the divine through its own resources, unsupported by, and even unaware of, other means. The similarity between certain doctrines of Greek philosophy and Biblical views is so striking that Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and other theologians saw no explanation for it but to assume that Plato had been influenced by the "barbarian philosophy." Later the congeniality of Aristotle's natural theology and the Christian faith generated their close alliance in the Middle Ages. But there is a profound difference between the Aristotelian attitude towards faith and the attitude of the Christian thinkers. Aristotle could feel that thought was superior to the images of the mythical gods; that metaphysical discernment and argument could penetrate deeper into the hidden nature of the deity than religious imagination. Thus he could attain to a philosophic theology without any internal struggle between faith and thought. Mythological religion had no dogma and no doctrine; it was the pure product of an imagination nourished and enlarged from generation to generation by poets and by the poetical fancy of the Greek people. Greek religion could not rival the acuteness and consistency of metaphysical considerations. And still in another respect philosophy was superior to folk religion: it developed morally higher conceptions of the deity. "Xenophanes had boldly accused men of having attributed to the heavenly

<sup>1</sup> Met. 1074 b.

ones all that was disgraceful among men.”<sup>2</sup> Plato’s indignation on this score is well known.

These historical data demonstrate that the boundary line between revealed and natural theology involves an intricate problem, despite the fact that philosophy as a science, and religion as based on revelation, have different domains and different jurisdictions. This difference is obvious. Philosophy is basically and essentially theoretical. It rests upon logical argumentation and conclusion, it aims at doctrines, theories and systematic, methodical knowledge, while religion is related to life in its wholeness, especially to moral life, to conscience and conduct. Religion, therefore, comprises the whole of life, not only as philosophy does, by means of thought and concepts, but in the omnivorous fashion of life itself. Indeed, there is a religious aspect to every domain of life: there is a specific religious morality, there are religious virtues, religious obligations and actions; there is a religious art; there is a religious community, a religious law, a religious right; there is a religious science; in short, the whole cosmos of human activity is imbued with the religious spirit and controlled by religious authorities and tradition. Nothing of this kind corresponds within the province of philosophy, although, especially in the ancient times, philosophy strove to take the place of religion and to organize the whole of life. The difference between the realms of thought and faith, nevertheless, is unmistakable and inextinguishable.

Philosophy teaches, religion preaches. Philosophy is always the business of a single thinker, though he may form a school; religion is the common concern of a community though inaugurated by a founder. Philosophy has

<sup>2</sup> William Wallace, *Gifford Lectures on Natural Theology and Ethics* (ed. by Edw. Caird, Oxford, 1898, p. 27).

no priests, no cult; religion has no logical methods, no sober investigations. To be sure, certain philosophical schools have had a religious or semi-religious character and authority like the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, the Neo-Platonists; some philosophers seem akin to prophets and religious leaders. Christianity, on the other hand, had its own philosophers, professors, school systems, and methodical teaching. There is obviously a certain rivalry between the realms and their representatives. Philosophy is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life and reality; so is religion. The metaphysician is not a sober scientist, he has no exact experiments, and his statements never enjoy the same validity and acceptance as those of the mathematicians and physicists. A certain analogy between Socrates and Jesus, despite the huge gulf that separates them, cannot be denied; there is a similarity, too, between the writings of Plato where Socrates is the central figure and the Gospel. Philosophy and religion, though widely differing, are intimately connected; they even overlap in some respects and in some sectors.

Thus peace between the rivals is not guaranteed from the outset; they resemble two nations with adjacent territories. A boundary line divides them, but there is a bit of disputed country between them that continually threatens war. This intermediate both-man's-land arouses perennial quarrels. Its name is "theology." Religion proposes to construct its own theology, philosophy does likewise. To be sure, they proceed from different bases though they move to a common goal. This goal, a methodical and logical science of God, is identical. Both religious and philosophic, Biblical and natural, revelatory and rational theology represent different forms of the same science, namely theology. Therefore the task of relating them to each other is urgent. In the Middle Ages they were united

under the sway of Christianity. Since the Renaissance they have been separated and their relation has never been clear. This condition is becoming more and more scandalous. It mirrors the general gulf between religion and modern culture, between life and thought which characterizes our age. Philosophy pays little attention to religious theology, for religious theology claims special sources of knowledge. Some attempts have been made to bridge the chasm between these antagonists, undertaken by religious theologians, but the task is still undone. To outline the nature of this task and to suggest a solution is the purpose of these lectures. It is the same task which confronted men like Origen, Augustine, and the medieval thinkers, and which has been abandoned since the beginning of modern times without having been discharged satisfactorily. Modern science was believed to have found a new method. But the old task could not be taken over by science, nor by a philosophy which was based on scientific presuppositions or preoccupied with scientific problems and views (using the word "scientific" in the narrower sense of the natural sciences).

The conquest of philosophy by modern science caused all relations between philosophy and religion to become dubious, and every attempt to reconcile them became suspect. Philosophy boasted that it was entirely free from prejudices and could build up its theories on the same solid ground as mathematics and mathematical physics, that is on empirical experience and rational conclusions. The modern outlook is exactly opposite to that of the medieval scholar. Whereas Anselm had said: "*Credo ut intelligam*,"<sup>3</sup> the modern thinker says: "We must aban-

<sup>3</sup> In substance this thesis of course is older than the word of Anselm. Augustine has similar phrases, e.g., "*si non potes intelligere, crede ut intelligas*" (Sermo 118, 1); cp. c. Acad. III, 43; de ord. II, 26; Solil. I, 9; Hom. Ev. Joh. XXIX, 6.

don every belief before we begin to investigate nature. Only thus can objective knowledge arise." Belief implies an assumption that is not verified by experiment and critical observation. We must not admit such a hypothetical element in the field of philosophy since we do not admit it in that of science. This is the modern postulate. The difference in character between unwarranted assumption and religious faith was no longer felt and conceded. The need to reconcile knowledge and faith was no longer acknowledged as affecting the standpoint and the outlook of philosophy.

The sphere of science, based on sense experience and inference, on the one side, and, on the other, the sphere of religion based on revelation, seemed perfectly separated, an eternal peace between them seemed achieved. But this is only the outer impression which deceives the spectator. It is not the inner truth of the state of modern man. Here in his inner life he is divided against himself. Intellect and heart are not in harmony with each other. Their sound order is disturbed. Man has to decide whether he will trust the guide of science and scientific philosophy or the guide of revealed religion. No clear relation exists between these opposite poles. Has science the primacy or has faith the primacy? This is the question.

Philosophy can and should contribute its resources to the task of restoring and reconciling man with himself again. Religion has a legitimate right to interfere with philosophy, when ultimate questions concerning the meaning of life and reality are raised, as religion or religious theology should admit that philosophy is entitled and even obliged to participate in the endeavor to fathom the depths of deity. The calamitous chasm between these parties should be filled by mutual good will. Both have a

common interest at stake, both the theologian and the philosopher are actually persons involved in both religion and philosophy, because they are both feeling and thinking beings. Philosophy must abstain from the attempt to replace religion, or to deliver a theology which requires no revelation, as the natural theology of the eighteenth century did. It has to forego the temptation to regard religion as a lower form of metaphysical insight. Philosophy and religion are different paths to the same destination. Religion is superior in a certain sense, because God is a mystery, and because the language of religion is better adapted to the nature of this mystery than is the language of philosophy. On the other hand, philosophy is superior in respect to the rational side of theological method. Religious theology, therefore, must cease regarding as contemptible the share which philosophy can contribute to the common task.

When Lord Gifford, the founder of these lectures, wrote the regulations concerning their content and method, a generation existed which still believed in the possibility of natural theology as a strictly natural science. This science, he says, should be treated "without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation. I wish it considered just as astronomy or chemistry is." Times have changed. It is unlikely that a thinker today would strive to initiate a theology in the fashion and with the methods of chemistry or astronomy. We feel again that God is a hidden God, and that the natural and the supernatural cannot be treated in the same manner. Even when we think it possible to approach the divine by means of thought without relying upon any religious source, we can no longer ignore the gap between the physical and the metaphysical realms. It is no longer admissible to think of God in terms of



natural causality or substantiality. And, therefore, the question whether any science or any human knowledge about God is possible at all can no longer be answered in the affirmative without severe consideration and inquiry. Was Kant not right in forbidding such a science altogether? Is any philosopher entitled to return to natural theology after having studied Kant's criticism of all knowledge of the Supreme Being? And are not perhaps those Christian theologians right who assert that there is no access to the divine mystery save through divine revelation?

Natural theology is threatened by two powerful and allied foes, one of them undertaking to destroy it from within by means of rational criticism, the other from without by means of faith and dogmatics. Critical or anti-metaphysical philosophy and anti-philosophical theology unite in opposing all attempts of pure reason to inquire into the mystery of God. Nevertheless the attempt must be renewed. Perhaps never before has it been so necessary, so urgent to renew it as today. For never before has the chasm between faith and secular culture widened so dangerously. The illness of our culture cannot be cured except by reconciling the sundered parts of the human mind and of human society. Philosophy must participate in this task by showing that there is a bridge between faith and reason, that there is a natural theology in the sense of a rational or speculative discipline which is in agreement with Biblical theology. On the other hand, it does not suffice to repeat the content of faith and to re-establish dogma without taking into consideration the judgment of pure reason. Too many people have lost their confidence in tradition and no longer understand the truth of revealed religion unsupported by philosophical thought. Such a system of thought, it is true, can never supersede

or generate faith; but it can justify and reinforce the religious outlook, it can disclose the inner alliance of faith and reason, of imaginative and abstract knowledge. In these lectures I shall first discuss this problem and its solution within the philosophy of Kant. I should like to add some remarks about the verdict on rational theology delivered by the most rigorous modern representative of an exclusively scriptural standpoint, Karl Barth.

It is a real merit of Karl Barth to have rediscovered the logical consistency and strength of reformed theology. The level of the discussion is elevated by his emphasis on this classical virtue. The Barthian theology has sharpened the conscience of the philosopher trying to maintain a rational theology, and it has deepened the understanding of what revelation and the word of God mean. But philosophy should not be discouraged by the stern attitude of the dogmatic thinker and by his inexorable rejection of all philosophic collaboration in the field of theological knowledge. The dogmatic theologian is perfectly right in defending the dominion of religious tradition. He fails, however, to keep his claim legitimate when he begins to contest the right of philosophy to deal with theological problems in its own way. He transgresses the limit which he has himself laid when he judges about problems which can never arise as long as he remains on the ground of biblical revelation.

Only he who believes in the necessity and in the possibility of uniting biblical and natural (or rational) theology is able and entitled to determine what contribution can be given by philosophy to theology and where philosophy loses its power.<sup>4</sup> Even if it be true that the Bible, as

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus: "But if we are not to philosophize, what then? For no one can condemn a thing without first knowing it. Consequently we must philosophize." (*Stromata*, Book VI, Chap. XVIII.)

the word of God, is the purest source of religious knowledge and the only genuine basis of faith, it does not follow that theological knowledge cannot be attained also by means of speculative thought. Biblical theology, keeping within the bounds of biblical revelation, cannot envisage the scope of possible philosophic solutions in any field, not even in the field of speculative theology. The dogmatic theologian cannot inquire into the possibility of approaching the divine mystery by means of thought, because, as a dogmatic theologian, he has never explored the conditions and the limits of rational speculation. It is perfectly true that God, as He reveals Himself in the Bible, cannot be met by such speculation. He is a person, and thought or reason cannot meet a person, even if it should be possible to answer the question whether or not God must be thought of as a person. But the problem concerning the relation of the different levels of religious revelation and rational speculation lies outside the possible considerations and decisions of dogmatic theology.

The biblical point of view does not forbid reasoning about God, the world, and man. To be sure, the Bible does not permit any doubt as to the ability of man to reach ultimate truth. The Bible denies man's ability to solve *all* problems by asserting that there is an impenetrable and inscrutable mystery. But the Bible does not say how far human understanding can penetrate this mystery. It hints at the limit when it warns that God's thoughts are not our thoughts or that we cannot see God face to face as long as we live on earth. But this imaginative distinction is not confined to the contrast of revelation and speculation; on the contrary, it characterizes even revealed knowledge as insufficient. If it is true that God has created man in his image, then we should be permitted to use the mental power which He has given to us in order to seek for traces

of His creatorship throughout the world, and within our own reason too. Even Barth himself deals with this possibility, but he comes to a purely negative result: man is completely barred out, he cannot reach the divine mystery in any way. Barth is not only a dogmatist in the justified religious sense of this term, but he is also dogmatic in the sense of being inclined to prejudge and to yield to prejudice. Such an attitude is not dictated by faith nor by the word of God, but by lack of philosophical interest and insight.

Christian theology is not entitled to make any statement about the relation between reason and the divine mystery in terms of reason, simply because such theology does not speak in terms of reason at all. It envisages philosophical problems no more than philosophy envisages the living God. And this status cannot be altered until a territory has been found where both Christian and natural theology can meet to be reconciled and united. Biblical theology teaches that man has fallen and that he lies in the fetters of sin; that he, therefore, is unable to return to God through his own power. That may be true, but it does not exclude the possibility of using those powers for the purpose of knowledge of a sort. No dogmatist can tell us how far we can go in this way, and what we can or cannot attain. It is undeniable that there is a limit. But the question where it must be drawn cannot be answered by biblical theology. It is the task of philosophical inquiry and speculation to find out the nature and the place of this limit. Even the expression "mystery," applied by biblical theology to characterize the limit of human understanding and rational speculation, requires a philosophic interpretation. This interpretation is by no means self-evident and simple; on the contrary, it is extremely difficult and raises questions which perhaps cannot

be answered. Thus, it is clear that dogmatic theology and speculative philosophy, though they are striving after the same ideal of truth in the same field of knowledge, nevertheless have different standards of logical perfection. Dogmatic theology is neither able nor entitled to prejudice the results of philosophic reflection. The difference of principles and methods and of the spheres from which they issue makes the task of the unification of the two different ways of theology hazardous and toilsome.

Karl Barth denies categorically and "dogmatically" that there is any access to the mystery of God save the word of God Himself, as revealed in the Bible. God is a living God, His will is a free will; therefore the only way of meeting Him is the way of hearing and obeying His commandments. Man has no power to open the holy shrine of truth; God alone keeps the key. We have no adequate notion of God; God can never become the object of any human science. If He could, man would be able to "dispose" of God, whereas God instead disposes of man. "An idea, made up with the claim to be the idea of God, is, not as an idea, but on account of this claim—an idol. Even the idea of God as conceived by Plato, a really pure idea which can almost fascinate by its purity, cannot be exempted from this verdict."<sup>5</sup>

Is that verdict justified? Why does Plato fascinate Karl Barth as he has fascinated so vast a number of Christian theologians at all epochs in every country? Does not this fascination suggest the point where the Platonic and the Christian knowledge of God coincide to a certain degree? If that holds good, how is it possible that purely human knowledge can find a way to an idea of God consistent with that which is revealed by God Himself? Neither

<sup>5</sup> *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, Bd. I, Halbbd. I, 2. Aufl., Munchen 1935, p. 412.

religious theology alone nor philosophical or natural theology alone can answer this question. On the other hand, the Christian theologian, as well as the worldly thinker, is urged to put this question, like Clement, the first thinker, who tried to combine Greek philosophy and Christian faith.

Of course, Karl Barth is perfectly right when he points out that despite the fascination emanating from the platonic doctrine of the supreme idea of the Good, no idea whatsoever can take the place of the living God. If we replace the living God by a philosophic idea, we really deify our idea, making it an idol. Such a deification has to be duly rejected not only by the dogmatist but by every Christian thinker. On the other hand, the dogmatist is compelled to speak of the mystery of God and to admit that his knowledge of God is limited as is that of the philosopher. Were either of them entitled to claim unrestricted knowledge, he then could contest the right of the other to claim any knowledge of God at all, as Barth in fact does. But neither Barth nor the philosopher can legitimately claim exclusive right. Neither one can know how far knowledge can reach in this sublime field. It is as impossible to imprison the divine in a dogmatic theology as it is impossible to confine the highest Being within the limits of a speculative metaphysics. We can and must approach theological knowledge in two different ways, and we do not know how these two ways are connected in the divine itself, for we cannot carry either to completion. Both lead into the darkness of mystery.

Karl Barth defines dogmatics as "the rational endeavor to grasp the divine mystery." "The more serious," he says, "this endeavor is, the more it will end in understanding or conceiving the divine mystery as a mystery. Therefore it can be worth while to devote oneself to this

endeavor.”<sup>6</sup> Precisely the same is true in the case of philosophical or natural theology. The word or term “mystery” indicates in both cases the same fact, that we cannot penetrate to the final end of knowledge. There is something that God has not revealed and that cannot be revealed as long as we live on earth; and there is also much that cannot be grasped by means of thought. It is just this “something” which makes possible the duality of revelation and reason, of imaginative and notional knowledge, of positive and natural theology. Neither way nor form of knowledge is adequate in the last analysis. The inadequacy of each of them demands and permits the legitimacy of the other. They supplement each other. But we cannot fully understand how, since we do not know the final end of either way, which is their common end. It is this insight which reconciles them, although it is not possible to unify them completely nor to derive the duality from one and the same highest insight or principle.

All these statements are based on one definite presupposition, namely, that man has access to the divine mystery, not only through revelation, but also through his own understanding and reason. Dogmatic theology cannot refute this presupposition, as Karl Barth declares. The divine mystery has two different aspects according to the two forms of knowledge or approach. We can call them the aspect of personality, and the aspect of universality. The divine, as revealed or revealing Himself, is a living person; as conceived in the realm of abstract knowledge, He is universal truth. Or in other words: universal truth, as revealed in the Bible, is God; God, as conceived in or by our understanding, is universal truth.

But these definitions are not yet complete and perfect, though they are not erroneous; they demand further in-

<sup>6</sup> I.c. p. 388.

vestigation and analysis. Barth has too low an idea of what philosophy is and aims at doing, when he categorically rejects the claim of philosophy to deal with the divine mystery. Reading his dogmatics, one has the definite impression that he knows only the alternative between revelation and the trivial consciousness of ordinary life. As a dogmatist, nay, as a Christian, he is right in dividing the sacred from the profane, the eternal from the temporal, the spiritual from the rational, but this dichotomy is not complete. If it is true that man can approach the divine mystery along the path of rational inquiry, then a particular sphere of human activity, though profane in the highest religious sense, is nevertheless not included in his bifurcation. The profane sphere is not uniform; it contains various strata, lower and higher stages. The highest stage neighbors the sacred sphere and in the boundary line both spheres seem to overlap. May we say that religion leads from God to man, philosophy from man to God? Religion does not attain the rationality of philosophy, philosophy does not reach the personality of God. But there is a meeting point between the extremes. Could we take our stand at this point, we should be able to reconcile the antagonistic views of dogmatic and natural theology.

In any case, the two opposite ways have one common ground: this is the mystery of the divine. But, unfortunately, the character of mystery allows us no footing; mystery affords no ground for an argument nor a premise that can yield a train of deductions. On the contrary, mystery destroys all arguments, it deprives us of the solid ground on which we, as thinkers, can stand. Both biblical and natural theology confront ultimate problems they cannot solve and even contradictions they cannot evade. It is a contradiction in itself that knowledge should be rooted in mystery. The very phrase "knowledge of the divine



mystery" is baffling. How can mystery be the object of knowledge? Is it not by its very nature the unknowable? Thus, do not knowledge and mystery exclude each other?

It seems to be extremely difficult, if not completely impossible, to find a language common to both kinds of theology, or to fix the point at which they would meet. The Christian theologian cannot speak of the divine as the content of a conceptual idea, and the philosopher cannot speak of God as revealed or revealing Himself in Scripture. How then accomplish the task of reconciling the opponents or of reconciling ourselves in so far as we are at the same time both thinkers and believers, persons endowed with an autonomous intellect and children of God? How can we ever hope to unite knowledge and faith, if we are not even able to combine both in one and the same personal attitude? With what right can we assert that natural and inspired theology aim at the knowledge of the same ultimate mystery, since we have no access to this mystery except the antagonistic ways of thought and faith? The point where they would meet lies beyond the grasp of both. On the other hand, it is the apex to which both are striving. The identity of our own self seems to guarantee this identity of the Ultimate. Although the Ultimate can never be completely encompassed by either theology, in so far as we can conceive of it as the Ultimate, we can be sure that it is one and the same, common to both the theology of reason and the theology of revelation.

The fact that each of us is one and the same person permits us and even commands us to assert that it is one and the same divine mystery that confronts us in religion as well as in philosophy. This sameness is the reason religious and philosophic language use one and the same central word to express their ultimate goal and concern,

the word: *truth*. And both know that ultimate truth is hidden, and that neither religious revelation nor metaphysical knowledge can ever contain the full and unrestricted truth. It is just this immediate awareness which unites and reconciles both approaches to the Ultimate without altering or lessening their differences. Thus the theology of faith is bound not to render impossible the theology of thought, while metaphysics is bound not to assert anything that could weaken or diminish the position of revealed knowledge. Philosophy should be warned never to forget that there is an ultimate mystery and that revelation is the form in which this mystery is brought to us in religion. If philosophy acknowledges the legitimacy of revelation and gives up the vain attempt to make itself a substitute for it, the path to reconciliation is opened. For it is the task of philosophy, not of religion, to bring about this reconciliation, since there is a philosophy of religion, but not a corresponding department within religion. Philosophy, in other words, must understand religion, not religion philosophy. Clemens Alexandrinus became a philosopher to do this very thing.

Although philosophy must make religion the object of reflection, it must respect the line of demarcation between the realms. Thus it must restrict itself. Indeed, it is the consequence of a right appreciation of religion on the part of philosophy to draw the line which limits the prerogative of philosophic reflection. This was the intention of the criticism of Kant, and in this respect his standpoint is a permanent contribution. It is the noblest task of philosophy to discover and to exhibit the ultimate mystery in all spheres of human experience; it is not its task to supplant revelation by speculation, be it ever so refined. Kant was right in bridling the aspirations of metaphysics.

Philosophy must—to use an expression of Plato—save

the ultimate mystery. It must trace all problems back to mystery. But philosophy is not entitled to violate the character of this mystery by the attempt to transform it into conceptual knowledge and so to deprive it of its nature. Philosophy does not come to an end: the nature of the Ultimate as mystery forbids ultimate solutions. The manner in which Plato leads the reader of the dialogues on and on without ever coming to a definite and final destination is consequently more philosophic than is the happy ending of other systems. Philosophy not only begins but also terminates in the feeling of wonder. This feeling is akin to religious awe, indeed it is the same feeling transferred to another domain. Philosophy is the elaborate attempt of the thinking mind to approach the ultimate, all-embracing and all-penetrating mystery, called by the holy book God.

Divine mystery is the universal mystery. There is nothing outside it, no being and no idea, no existence and no essence, nothing real and nothing ideal. This is the reason why religion speaks of God as the Creator of the world, and even of Christ as begotten by God, and of the Holy Spirit as having proceeded from God; and the reason why the earliest fathers of the church insisted that even physical matter is created by God, and that there is nothing whatever that is not created by Him. It has often been said that Christianity is dualistic because of the duality of Creator and creation, Eternity and temporal life, Spirit and flesh, Grace and nature, heaven and hell. That dualism is true, but it is only one aspect; in another aspect Christianity is thoroughly monistic, and this aspect is basic. Christianity is monistic, because it teaches that God originally is all in all, that He alone is the source of everything that is or can be, that this world is His, and that the difference between those opposite sides is no final

one. At the end of time He will become again "all in all," an idea stressed by Origen. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." Philosophy achieves its best when it tries to understand this monistic and that dualistic outlook in its own way, and to explain how both can be aspects of the same ultimate reality.

Karl Barth distinguishes "God in Himself" and "God for us," or the "eternal history of God" and "God's revelation as history," and frequently admits that the word of God, as revealed to us, is always mixed with worldly or human elements; and that dogma has originated from the attempt to formulate biblical revelation in the terms of contemporary philosophy.<sup>7</sup> Barth thus admits that what we know about God in dogmatic theology is always restricted by man's capacity to understand God. How can it be justifiable that contemporary philosophy has been used for the purpose of dogmatics, if there is an irreconcilable cleavage between revelation and speculation, holy and profane theological knowledge? Only an inner relationship between the two opponents, only an ultimately common ground can explain and vindicate this fusion. As God's own revelation is necessarily adapted to man's capacity, conversely man's speculation is necessarily adapted to the character of the Ultimate as it appears before the thinking mind. Both are determined by ultimate truth. Man has not arbitrarily invented or molded the possibilities of metaphysical speculation, he has stamped his concepts in accordance with the exigencies of the object of speculation, however problematical these concepts may be. We are not entitled to say that the Ultimate reveals itself in the medium of thought, for this expression vitiates the peculiar nature of revelation and does not characterize the real method of speculation; but,

<sup>7</sup> I.c. pp. 171 ff., 359, 399.

on the other hand, we must remain aware of the parallelism between natural and revealed theology. As dogma and dogmatics are influenced by contemporary philosophy, so was philosophy influenced by contemporary theology, not only in the Middle Ages, but also in modern times, in Locke and Berkeley, in Descartes and Leibniz, in Kant and his successors.

To be sure, natural theology underwent momentous alterations during its development from ancient times. It was severely criticized by Kant, and it seemed condemned to death by his verdict. Is this doom final? To answer this question we must carefully examine the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

## CHAPTER II

### *Kant's Critique of Natural Theology*

THE MEDIEVAL harmony between philosophy and religion, natural and sacred theology, reason and revelation, has undergone two heavy attacks in modern times which have radically disrupted it. The first attack was made from the side of religion, the second from the side of philosophy. Luther and Kant were the initiators respectively. They had the same target, they rejected purely intellectual or theoretical knowledge in the field of theology; or, in other words, they denied the validity of Greek thought in this field.<sup>1</sup> Their arguments and even their motives were different, and so also the results they accomplished. Luther fought against human reason in general so far as it was not supported and inspired by the word of God. Kant strove against the primacy of theoretical speculation in the whole fabric of human valuations and propagated, instead, the primacy of practical or ethical reason. The interest of Luther was dictated by his belief in the activity of God alone; the interest of Kant by his critique of pure reason. An immense gap separates these outlooks, the gap between two different ages. Luther was rooted in medieval ground, Kant was spokesman for the modern spirit. But this modern day begins already to decline. We no longer believe so much in man as did the contemporaries of Kant. We begin to realize again that faith in the power

<sup>1</sup> Luther expressed strongly and often coarsely his animosity against Greek philosophy and philosophy in general. "Philosophy," he writes as a young man, "is an old woman that stinks of Greece."

of God is the basis even of man's own power and of reason's achievements. Therefore we must stress once more the religious outlook, without cancelling the benefits bequeathed by Kant. We must attain a new harmony between religion and philosophy. This task cannot be achieved by going back to any former position, be it that of Thomas Aquinas or Augustine. We must not forfeit the advantages of Kant's *Critique*.

It is an astonishing paradox in the history of the European mind that it was the *Christian* Church which propagated the ancient or *pagan* philosophy by resuming, first, Platonic and Neoplatonic schemes of thought, and then renewing the Aristotelian philosophy, while the succeeding modern epoch, which was in so many respects more *pagan* than Christian, rejected the ancient forms of thought and created, step by step, a philosophy that was born out of the *Christian* conscience as rediscovered in Protestantism. This new philosophic movement reached its summit and found its maturest interpreter in Kant. The key to the understanding of this paradox is the fact that Greek, and especially Aristotelian, thought, though *theological*, nevertheless is *not* originally *Christian*, while modern, and especially Kantian, thought, though *not theological*, nevertheless is essentially *Christian*.

It was protestant piety which abandoned the patterns of ancient philosophy and discovered a new method of thought. The protestant faith protested not only against catholic faith but also against catholic theology and philosophy. The protest against catholic philosophy reached its consummation in Kant's critique of natural theology, for this theology was an integral part of scholasticism. Scholasticism asserted the possibility of rational knowledge of God in agreement with the Christian faith. It followed the dictum of Augustine: "*Si sapientia Deus est*,

*per quem facta sunt omnia, sicut divina auctoritas veritasque monstravit, verus philosophus est amator Dei.*" By applying the ancient conceptions concerning the relation between God and the world, scholasticism tried to base theological speculation on "pure reason" and on the Christian faith as well. Kant demonstrated that pure reason is incapable of producing such theological knowledge. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is at the same time a critique of European philosophy as developed from the Greeks to Leibniz; it is the *critique of Greek reason*.

What is the peculiar character of Greek thought, as criticized by Kant? It is not so much a body of doctrine as an attitude. This attitude originated in the assumption that not religion but philosophy opened the path to the knowledge of God. Lacking a true religious knowledge of God, the Greek was driven to build up a philosophic knowledge of God that was superior to his religious imagination. Thus the consciousness grew and was finally proclaimed by Aristotle that thought or pure reason can accomplish what religion cannot, and can attain to an adequate idea of God, to a theological metaphysics. In that way the primacy of philosophic speculation over the religious life was established. Not faith but reason first established the monotheistic idea of God and thus deepened the religious consciousness. It was philosophy which raised the idea of God to an ethical level not reached in the popular myths.

This situation was wholly altered during the Christian era. No longer was philosophical thought deemed the superior faculty. Not scientific knowledge, but the actuality of religious life had reached the higher level. Philosophy was outdone by revelation, the thinker by the prophet, Socrates was surpassed by Jesus Christ. The Christian ethic superseded the ethic of paganism, even in its purest



and highest manifestations. Religious sects, descended from philosophical systems or cults, were overpowered by the growing Christian community. It was not until Kant that the implications of this situation were realized in the realm of philosophic study. He was the first to understand by purely philosophic means why Christian faith had been able to triumph over Greek philosophy, by showing the limit of pure reason in the realm of speculative theology. He defeated speculation in its own stronghold and by its own methods: it is pure reason that criticises pure reason in Kant's *Critique*.

Although philosophy was called the handmaiden of theology throughout the Middle Ages, the real relation between speculative philosophy and Christian theology during those centuries is not accurately described by that statement; for though it is true that theology was the master in the house of scholastic philosophy, this theology itself was mastered by speculation and by categories derived from Greek thought.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle and not the Gospel was victorious in scholasticism. The philosophic development from Augustine to Thomas exhibits the ever-increasing adoption of thought elements originally and essentially foreign to the Christian faith, the growing self-estrangement of the basic attitude of prophetic religion. It marks a period of an ever-advancing secularization of theological thought. Luther, therefore, opposed scholasticism as he opposed the whole tendency of that development. And Kant finally gave philosophy a new foundation with faith as its basis.

<sup>2</sup> I agree in principle with the intentions of Etienne Gilson as expounded in *Christianity and Philosophy* (1939), but I do not agree with the thesis that the medieval philosophy is the only right form of a "Christian philosophy." On the contrary, this philosophy, as based on the ancient categories, is not yet tinged by the Christian attitude towards reason as Kant's philosophy is.

To be sure, Kant's accomplishment should be qualified, because his criticism of rational theology did not immediately serve the Christian faith but instead a rational faith based on practical (moral) reason. And in this respect Kant's philosophic standpoint is more remote from the Christian faith than the scholastic system had been in spite of the latter's Aristotelian foundation. Confusing and interwoven are the historical motives and trends in the development of European thought. A real Christian philosophy, therefore, has not yet been written. One must agree perfectly with Karl Barth when he says, that all endeavor to create a Christian philosophy has failed so far, and that the thinkers who aimed at such a philosophy produced "either a real and then no Christian or else a Christian and then no real philosophy."<sup>3</sup>

Kant's "critique of all theology, based upon speculative principles" intended to destroy forever all purely rational knowledge of God. Kant shows that no extension of the categories which make experience, and therefore science, in the empirical world possible, can be permitted in order to attain knowledge of things beyond that world. We are able to explore causal relation in the world of sense, because our intellect connects the sense data according to the rule of temporal sequence. But in the field of the supernatural, or the divine, no sense data are at our disposal and, therefore, no use of the rational rules or forms of connection is possible. Thus no rational knowledge of God, no natural theology can be achieved. If we try to attain knowledge of God by rational means, then we ensnare ourselves in mere illusions. Kant expressed this doctrine in an extremely sceptical fashion; he vehemently denied the right and the ability of reason to attain to any legitimate knowledge of God.

<sup>3</sup> l.c. p. 4.

Kant derives the idea of God from the imperfection of all empirical knowledge. No empirical object can ever be perfectly known because we have no adequate intuition of the sum total of all material conditions which determine the reality of any entity in the empirical world. Our empirical knowledge is always fragmentary and can never be complete. Even the idea of an end of our knowledge is hypothetical because the very nature of infinity contradicts the possibility of such an end. Nevertheless our reason is bound to conceive of the absolute perfection of our knowledge as the practical goal of all our scientific striving. We need the idea of the end of our striving as an ideal of reason. Kant calls this ideal "transcendental" because it transcends the horizon of the empirical world, and of empirical knowledge altogether.

The transcendental ideal represents a problem never to be solved by knowledge. It contains the positive determinations of all things real and possible, therefore it has rightly been called the "*ens realissimum*," i.e., the most real thing. If we hypostatise and personify this ideal, it takes the shape of a highest being or of the being of all beings, in other words, of God. But this hypostasis and personification is in no way justified by reason. "In any such use of the transcendental idea we should, moreover, be overstepping the limits of its purpose and validity. For reason, in employing it as a basis for the complete determination of things, has used it only as the *concept* of all reality, without requiring that all this reality be objectively given and that it be itself an existing thing. Such a thing is a mere fiction in which we combine and realise the manifold of our idea in an ideal, as an individual being. But we have no right to do this, nor even to assume the possibility of such an hypothesis. Nor do any of the consequences which flow from such an ideal have any bear-

ing upon the complete determination of things, or exercise in that regard the least influence. . . ." <sup>4</sup>

In accordance with this sceptical attitude Kant denies the validity of any proof of the existence of God by theoretical means, or by means of speculation. All these proofs are completely illusory, as Kant shows in detail. Even if we were rightly entitled to grasp the idea of God in the way mentioned, we are not allowed to assert the existence of the object of this idea. To assert that an individual being exists, demands the real or possible experience of this being, the possibility of its appearance, and we have no means of assuring such a possibility; on the contrary, it is excluded through the very nature of the idea or concept of this being. Reason alone, moreover, unsupported by intuition, cannot deduce the existence of anything, for existence is no rational predicate at all; it is a predicate that demands the context of a possible experience to be attributed to an idea or to its object. The transcendental ideal is an ideal only, it is no real thing; this is as much as theoretical or speculative knowledge can affirm.

Kant's verdict against all speculative theology is relentless. "Our understanding is in no way fitted" for it.<sup>5</sup> Kant discloses the abysmal depth of human ignorance in this field of knowledge.<sup>6</sup> There is a boundary line between our mental faculty of understanding on the one hand, and religion, on the other hand, between reason and faith. Reason can never transcend this line. Kant criticises

<sup>4</sup> Cr. of P.R., B 608 (A 580).

<sup>5</sup> l.c. B 664 (A 636).

<sup>6</sup> In a footnote to the chapter on the transcendental ideal Kant speaks of the great value of discoveries concerning our ignorance. "The observations and calculations of astronomers have taught us much that is wonderful; but the most important lesson that they have taught us has been by revealing the abyss of our ignorance, which otherwise we could never have conceived to be so great. . . ." (Cr. of P.R., B 603.)

reason, as he says in the preface to the second edition, "in order to make room for faith." His scepticism in no way extends to religion, it concerns our human knowledge only. It is a scepticism directed against theorizing about God, by no means against our belief in the existence of God. Kant sharply separates theoretical knowledge and religious belief. Belief is, as Kant's doctrine of rational faith defines it, the attitude of practical or moral, not the attitude of theoretical or speculative, reason. To save and to defend faith against all possible scepticism, Kant smashes all arrogant knowledge in the field which sensation and perception can never reach.

"Pure" reason is purely negative. It can criticise itself but it cannot produce any real knowledge. The religious source of Kant's attitude is Protestantism. Luther's doctrine that faith, and faith alone, can constitute man's relationship to God has found an adequate philosophic ally and its expression in Kant's *Critique*. While medieval catholicism had brought about a system in which nature and grace, world and God, reason and revelation, were integral parts, supplementing each other, so that the whole was in perfect equilibrium in spite of the gap between the parts, Protestantism stressed the fact of the gap. While the catholic system reconciled the oppositions by means of a hierarchy which mediated between the lowest and the highest spheres in accordance with the neoplatonic type of philosophy, Protestantism emphasized the mission of God's word and of Christ as the only mediator between God and man, and thus generated the Kantian type of philosophy.

Protestantism rediscovered the paradoxical character of the Christian creed, and opposed it to the orthodox character of the scholastic system. The fact was emphasized anew, that the Gospel is called a stumbling block

and foolishness. Instead of the rational reconciliation between revelation and speculation effected by Thomism, Protestantism restated the impossibility of reconciling reason with the nature of God's mystery.<sup>7</sup> In Kant's *Transcendental Dialectic* this new (and old) religious outlook is reflected. Unavoidable antinomies, natural paralogisms, fatal illusions bar the way to the throne of the Highest for human understanding. Reason must capitulate to faith. Christian dialectic, as it appears in the parables of Jesus or in utterances of Paul, has not only the same implication as Kant's dialectic, but is also akin to it in spirit. Both point to the divine mystery which cannot be revealed without contradiction, and which therefore transcends the rational sphere.

Of course there is an important difference between the paradox of faith and the anti-dogmatic content of Kant's philosophy. Both agree in restricting human understanding, but while faith uses the paradox to express a truth that transcends its limits, Kant uses criticism to a purely negative end, at least for the possibility of human knowledge. There is no "dialectical method" whereby positive truth may be discovered. Kant does not exalt the "law of contradiction" in order to express truth as Hegel does. Kant does not establish a philosophic "paradox." On the contrary, he believes that he can explain why human understanding necessarily comes to contradictions, and in what way the contradictions are to be solved, namely, by restriction of our knowledge.

Is Kant's verdict a final one? Has his *Critique* annihilated speculative theology for all time? Does his negative attitude bind us still? Is no reconciliation possible

<sup>7</sup> This character of Protestantism has been pronounced with a new vigor in our days by Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich and other theologians.

between speculation and faith? Is it true, that all natural theology, from Aristotle to Hegel, from Clement to Thomas, was based on logical fallacies? Is the gap between reason and faith as deep and abrupt as Kant asserts? These questions we must discuss in order to re-constitute natural theology on a new basis.

Two items must be taken into consideration for this purpose. First, the relationship between theoretical (or speculative) and moral (or practical) reason and knowledge; second, the concept of existence as used by Kant with regard to the transcendental ideal, and rejected by him. The first item cannot be considered in full until Kant's doctrine of the primacy of practical reason and of rational faith has been developed in the next lecture. One point, however, may be mentioned here. The complete separation of mental faculties or of different phases of human reason is, though old in substance, more emphasized and developed by Kant than ever before. Of course, the division of problems into theoretical and practical has been classical since Aristotle. But Aristotle's metaphysics is far from being purely theoretical in the sense of Kant. On the contrary, Aristotle's doctrine concerning the existence and the nature of God combines precisely the functions of both theoretical and practical reason, or the viewpoints of logic, physics, and ethics. God is not only pure speculative reason; as the prime mover of the world, he is also the highest good. It is true, God's actuality is, according to Aristotle, the actuality not of the will, but of thought, and he is good in the highest degree, because he is this actuality in the highest degree. "It is through thinking that its value belongs to it."<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, "God thinks of that which is most divine and precious." The highest good which is represented by this actuality is

<sup>8</sup> Met. 1074 b. Transl. by W. D. Ross, Oxford, 1928.

the theoretical and moral order of the world, or the world's unity. In this respect he is the mover of both nature and the moral world, without being moved, as the object of desire and of thought; as this object he is desired not arbitrarily, but because he is "in itself desirable," and accordingly the best in every regard.<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult if not impossible to compare Kant with Aristotle without analyzing all the terms which both use, and it cannot be the task of this lecture to engage in such an analysis. But it can be maintained that Aristotle is far from thinking of God in the fashion criticised by Kant. The concept of God as designed by Aristotle is not the concept of all reality hypostatized and personified in an individual being; it is rather the concept of the thinking mind, freed from all restrictions which characterise the human mind. It is not the concept of a thing that is personified; it is that of a person who is nothing but a thinking mind. Aristotle emphasizes the actuality or the act of thought, in which God thinks the unchangeable, immovable, eternal truth, the full truth, all truth. God is this truth, he is what he thinks, and he thinks what he is. Truth is thus the actuality of thought. It is not really a thing, it is life, as Aristotle says. These determinations are not contained in Kant's concept of the transcendental ideal. Kant is not reflecting on the act and activity of thought when he criticises the speculative theology of the *ens realissimum*,

<sup>9</sup> Met. 1072 a. Aristotle proclaims a kind of supremacy of thought over desire, and so a kind of supremacy of theoretical over practical activity, but this doctrine does not imply a primacy of theoretical over practical reason, instead it means the primacy of reason over desire. "Thought," as applied to the knowledge of God and to God's nature is, according to Aristotle, not "theoretical" in the sense Kant uses the term, it is rather theoretical and practical as well. God is the highest good and the highest truth at the same time. Aristotle's theology is the result of the combination of metaphysics and ethics; both become one and the same "thought" in God.



or of all reality as itself an individual thing. Pure reason as criticised by Kant is thus a special type of reason, but not reason unqualified.

This deficiency in Kant's treatment of speculative theology is connected with the second problem that should be taken into consideration, namely with the concept of existence as a predicate of the *ens realissimum*. Kant is surely right in insisting on the impossibility of positing the existence of an individual being by means of thought only. But he goes too far when he deals with the transcendental ideal as an ideal of human reason only, as if no kind of objective reality could be attributed to it. It may be true that we have no objective intuition to fill the idea of the *ens realissimum*, and that even this idea in itself, i.e., its connotation, is questionable; nevertheless it cannot be denied or doubted that something must needs correspond to this problematic idea, something that not only belongs to the human mind or reason, but to the nature of being itself. The necessity which forces upon us the idea of the highest being is not a *psychological* one, it is a logical or *ontological* necessity. We may not know anything about the nature of the object of this idea, nay, we may even be obliged to admit that the content of the idea is "hypothetical" or problematic, nevertheless the idea is objectively necessary, for we know that truth about empirical objects cannot be fully obtained without that determination which is assumed to be contained in the object of this idea.

In other and simpler words: if it is not true that something exists which corresponds to the object of the problematic idea, then nothing at all can exist. If we call this something "God," then we can conclude that the existence of "God" is the necessary condition of the existence of everything that exists. Reason must appeal to "God" as

the highest instance of all knowledge, simply because the name of God represents the highest goal of all knowledge: the goal of truth. *The idea of truth* is the point where epistemological and ontological thought converge and mingle.

To be sure, if we reserve the concept "existence" to individual things and beings only, then we must admit that reason cannot grant the existence of God as the object of the transcendental idea. God cannot be thought of as an individual. But is this impossibility a lack of insight on the part of reason or thought? Is it not, on the contrary, a real insight that God is not to be known as an object of experience; that He is not on the same level as a stone, a plant or an animal, not even at the level of the heavenly bodies which Aristotle and even Origen put in His vicinity? If Kant had denied the existence of God in this restricted sense only, then he would obviously have been right. But he was not right in regarding the impossibility of thinking of God in this fashion as a deficiency of reason. It is not a deficiency of the human mind that it cannot perceive God like other empirical things, for God does not belong to that order.

Is Kant then right in saying that there is no objective, theoretical knowledge of God at all? He would be right, if he confined the meaning of objective, theoretical knowledge to the scientific realm alone. Such a determination would not exclude a knowledge of God which, though not objective, nevertheless would be theoretical in the same sense in which the *Critique* itself is theoretical. The *Critique* does not contain objective scientific knowledge or knowledge of the objective world, but rather knowledge of knowledge or self-knowledge of knowledge. Is not perhaps the knowledge of God, if there be such, akin to this self-knowledge? If that should prove correct, then it

would follow that Kant had not destroyed speculative theology altogether. He destroyed a special kind of rational theology, the kind which dealt with God in the same way as science deals with matter and natural powers, as if God were a thing like other things in space and time. He destroyed that kind of theology which proceeded by analogy with the natural sciences. And thus he destroyed the natural theology founded by Aristotle and maintained by all his followers. For Aristotle, although he recognized God as a thinking spirit, nevertheless determined the concept of the divine, not by means of self-reflection, but instead by means of objective knowledge and inference: God is the prime mover of the world, He is a thing like all other things, belonging to the same world of objects as natural things, though possessed of a special essence. All successors of Aristotle in the Middle Ages held to this standpoint in principle; Leibniz, indeed, was still following his model. Kant was the first to expose the radical failure of all these attempts.

At the same time it must be remarked that neither Aristotle nor his successors and followers were so blind as not to see the difference between God and finite things in the world. They saw this difference but they did not succeed in clarifying it sufficiently. In spite of this insufficiency some insights gained by them are not to be neglected, and Kant was surely wrong in annihilating all speculative theology because of that mistake which he rightly discovered. He was wrong in identifying all possible speculative theology with the type of a science of God which he criticised because it was built up by analogy with the natural sciences. Kant was able to separate physics and metaphysics radically because he discovered the peculiar co-operation of sensation and intellect in the realm of the natural sciences.

Aristotle was "speculative" even in the field of physics as he was "empirical" in the field of metaphysics. He did not fully realize the gap between philosophic and empirical, metaphysical and physical knowledge. It is characteristic that his metaphysics contains a theory of the physical universe regarding the solar system, while his physics deals with the metaphysical problem of space and time. His metaphysics is as physical as his physics is metaphysical, if we use the terms in the modern fashion. Kant, on the other hand, was so eager to analyze scientific knowledge that the very concept of knowledge blended with the special kind required by science. Consequently he felt obliged to deny the legitimacy of all rational knowledge of God altogether, not acknowledging that speculative theology at all times was more, or was something else than merely a branch of science in the sense inquired into by the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Now a most serious and grave question arises: is any other speculative theology possible if reason avoids the way in which Aristotle and all his followers have proceeded? Is it possible to retain the Aristotelian type of theology after having purified and purged it of those elements which can no longer be retained? The mere reference to the knowledge validated by Kant's *Critique* itself (to the reflective knowledge of knowledge) cannot suffice. This knowledge, though surely not scientific (that is, not empirical in the sense of the natural sciences), is not speculative (that is, not metaphysical in the Aristotelian sense of theology) either. It has human knowledge as its subject matter, not God. It is a *metaphysic of knowledge* or an epistemology and not a *metaphysic of being* or an ontology. Is it possible to graft this kind of epistemological knowledge upon the subject matter of theology? Is there any inner connection between the activity of our own

understanding and the concept of God? Is there any access to God through knowledge from the standpoint of epistemological self-knowledge?

At first sight it seems as if this question should be answered in the negative. What a difference between our own way of acquiring knowledge concerning the objects as they appear in space and time, i.e., our empirical knowledge as analyzed and justified by the Critique, and—God as we know Him in the Bible! How is it possible to construct a bridge over this chasm? Is it possible at all? The activity of our own understanding in building up empirical knowledge can be experienced in a certain way. It is, though no empirical object (in the sense of the natural sciences), nevertheless an object of reflective experience, moreover of an experience which is concerned indirectly with empirical objects. God, on the contrary, does not belong to the realm of this inner experience. Should Aristotle's determination of God as "thought of thought" prove true, even then a speculative theology based on the self-reflection of the human understanding is not possible. The human self and the self of God cannot be inquired into by means of the same method. There is no possible reflection on the self of God from the standpoint of man. Even if it were true that the nature of God is, as Aristotle asserts, an everlasting activity of self-knowledge, this self-knowledge could never become our own self-knowledge!

If there were, on the other hand, no connection between our empirical knowledge and the idea of God, then Kant would never have spoken at all of this matter in his metaphysic of knowledge. He would never have criticised speculative theology, if a close connection did not exist between our empirical cognition and the idea of God. Indeed, there exists such a coherence between them. The

transcendental ideal as introduced by Kant means nothing but the ideal of all empirical cognition; it means the idea of an absolute completion and perfection of knowledge, or *the ideal of perfect truth*. Kant rejects the knowledge of God on the ground that this ideal can never be achieved by means of objective knowledge. He is right in this respect. But he forgets that the ideal of perfect truth transcends the limit of objective knowledge in any case, that it is not the *limit of the human mind* which forbids an objective knowledge of God but rather *the nature of God* who is no object and cannot become the object even of the most perfect objective knowledge! Kant does not realize that the ideal of an absolute completion of all empirical (scientific) knowledge leads beyond the entire sphere of all empirical objects; or in other words, that this ideal concerns not so much the completion of all *empirical* knowledge alone but the completion of the *metaphysic of knowledge* (of self-reflection or self-knowledge) as well. He forgets that, if there is any knowledge of God at all, this knowledge must be constructed by analogy with *self-reflection*, since God is no *object* but a *self*. Kant was misled by the fact that all speculative theology before his time had been constructed as an objective knowledge, that is, as the knowledge of an object, though of the highest and perfect object; of a thing, though of the most real thing.

There is still another reason why the belief in the possibility of an objective knowledge of God had been maintained so long before Kant, and why even Kant himself did not envisage any other possibility: the existence of a kind of experience of God which is, though different from, nevertheless akin to, our empirical experience of nature. I refer to *religious experience*. Aristotle could believe that it is possible to transform religious knowledge

into metaphysical thought in exactly the same manner and with the same success as it is possible to transform our empirical knowledge of sense objects into scientific (physical and metaphysical) knowledge. Since religious knowledge, as familiar to him, was mythological and therefore seemed to be as undeveloped and childish as crude sensation, he could think that both sense perception and mythological imagination could be purified by thought. Both were tainted with imaginary elements, and had to be revised and purified by reason. Aristotle substituted his critical metaphysical theology for the naïve faith of the Greeks. He did not notice the chasm between faith and knowledge. Or in so far as he noticed it he was naturally and rightly led to the conclusion that metaphysical knowledge was superior to mythological imagination. The Christian metaphysicians, from Clement to Thomas, knew the difference between faith and knowledge, and they also knew the supremacy of revelation and of revealed knowledge. But they, like Aristotle, believed uncritically in the possibility of a natural theology, and they held that both natural and revealed theology could form one great whole. They did not reflect on the rupture between reason and revelation, although they restricted the power of understanding the content of faith by means of thought. But the important point is that they assumed the possibility of a conceptual knowledge of the living God; they did not recognize that this knowledge necessarily and essentially is imaginative and must remain imaginative. Clement, the first in the long series of Christian thinkers, calls the highest stage of faith *gnosis* and he is convinced that *gnosis* is the only true philosophy. All his successors shared this opinion in a certain measure. All of them believed, therefore, not in the primacy of faith *qua* faith, but in the primacy of faith *qua* knowledge of God, and

this knowledge was religious as well as philosophic, revealed as well as natural, that is, rational.

Kant, on the other hand, wanted to restrict knowledge to "make room for faith." Thus he tried to destroy natural theology forever. And he was possessed of the conviction that all knowledge of God is illusory. He failed therefore to recognize the deep chasm between the empirical knowledge of nature, which he deemed valid, and the rational knowledge of God which he held illegitimate. The train of his argumentation can be rendered in the following syllogism:

God is the Supreme Being.

The knowledge of real beings requires empirical perception.

There is no empirical perception of the Supreme Being.

No knowledge of God is possible.

This syllogism is quite correct. But Kant is blind to the fact that the knowledge denied by this syllogism would be an empirical knowledge of God, and that such an empirical knowledge—if we exclude religious experience and revealed knowledge—is not even to be desired! Kant does not see that the reason why an empirical knowledge of God is denied to man should not be sought in man's restraint, that is, in the restriction of his finite intellect, but rather in the nature of the Infinite Spirit. Not man alone, but no intellect whatsoever can know God or should want to know God empirically, because God by His very nature is not an empirical object, but the *ens realissimum*, the Ideal of Reason, the supreme Self. In other words: not man's intellect, not the finite intellect, but rather intellect *qua* intellect cannot know the living God.

Should knowledge of God be possible in theoretical science, this science would have to be super-empirical or, as Kant uses the term, speculative. God cannot be re-



garded as just another kind of object; He is rather the Supreme Being because He is no object at all, but instead the highest, the perfect subject: Infinite Spirit. This truth is not achieved in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, although it is its necessary conclusion. In his later works, especially in the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant worked his way to it. There he conceived of the divine intellect as the perfect intellect which is no longer separated from intuition and therefore no intellect at all in the human sense. Rather it is a creative spirit. The restrictions of the human intellect, Kant then stated, do not consist in the lack of an empirical intuition or perception of the Supreme Being, but in the lack of intellectual, super-empirical intuition. The divine spirit is now characterized as possessing a productive intuition in himself, or as producing knowledge out of his own creativity without requiring support from sensation or from corresponding superhuman perception. Man would understand the divine spirit only if he could produce the knowledge of God in the same way.

Kant thus approves of a certain philosophical knowledge of God. Indeed, he corroborates and even augments the first entirely repudiated and refuted natural theology at the end of his career! He elevates the idea of God over the level of an *ens realissimum*, of an all-embracing *object*, of a thing-in-itself; he acknowledges that this highest ideal of reason is nothing short of the perfect knowing *subject*, the ideal *self* of knowledge. He realizes, in other words, that natural theology corresponds not to empirical science, but to reflection on empirical science and on the knowing subject. God must be conceived, not as an object that we cannot perceive, but as a self that we cannot actualize in ourselves because it transcends the limit of human subjectivity and the conditions of human activity. The knowledge of God is no knowledge of an object, it is God's

knowledge of Himself so that He Himself is the only norm and the very archetype of truth. This idea reapproaches the concept of the Aristotelian god. His successors were encouraged by this idea to venture a new revival of metaphysics on the basis prepared by the criticism of Kant.

I should like to draw some conclusions important for the discussions I will pursue in these lectures. God, in so far as pure reason can attain to a knowledge of Him, is not an object, not even the sum total of all objects; He is rather the all-embracing subject or the ideal self. But He is not only the self of perfect knowledge, He is also the perfect will; He is creative in both respects, and therefore no longer a knowing intellect or an acting will in the human sense. But we do not know of any other intellect or will by experience, and therefore the idea of the divine intellect and the divine will remains problematic; it remains the content of a problem, the solution of which is denied to us. *Natural theology is the science of this problematic idea.* Though the idea is problematic, it is nonetheless of the greatest importance, since it closes the system of thought not by giving final answers but by showing the necessity of revelation. Faith supplements what is lacking in the field of reason. Revelation delivers what experience lacks, not in the form of another *empirical* datum as the theological empiricists would claim (thus destroying the fruit of Kant's criticism), but instead in the form of an experience that is appropriate to the mystical nature of the Ultimate.

Kant did not succeed in appraising the true function of the religiously inspired imagination or prophetic consciousness because he was and remained throughout his life a child of the age of reason. He never overcame the prejudices of this age in spite of his discovery of the limit of reason, and in spite of his program to deny knowledge

in order to make room for faith. He persisted on the one hand, in the rejection of all natural theology but, on the other hand, he did not attain to a just appreciation of faith and revelation, of inspiration and imagination in the religious realm. These attitudes are connected in a specific way. Since Kant was a representative of the age of reason he tried to find a rational road to God. He believed he had found this road on the plane and within the limits of moral reason. Thus a moral faith or the "faith of a moralist" ensued from his premises and took the place of true religion as well as of natural theology.

It will be our task to rehabilitate both true religion and true philosophic theology without relapsing into the errors of former standpoints, be they theistic or deistic, Platonic or Aristotelian, empiristic or rationalistic. We must carry through the original program of the philosophy of Kant: *we must establish the primacy of faith by means of philosophical reflection.*

## CHAPTER III

### *Kant's Doctrine of Rational Faith*

KANT'S CRITIQUE of speculative theology is not his last word on the problem of the relation of man and God, between philosophy and religion, reason and faith. The most important doctrine concerning this subject is not contained in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and in Kant's later works. The negative attitude toward knowledge of God is no longer maintained in these later books. Kant goes on to admit that there is a kind of natural religion which even the critical standpoint cannot deny. To be sure, Kant qualifies the nature of this religion in a way which excludes almost all knowledge from it. The right attitude toward God, Kant teaches, is not theoretical, it is practical; it is an attitude of the moral will, not of the thinking intellect; of a faith based upon a practical need, not upon speculative reasons. "In the whole faculty of reason it is the practical reason only that can help us to pass beyond the world of sense, and give us knowledge of a supernatural order and connection. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

This knowledge, however, is a strictly practical one, and "cannot be extended further than is necessary for pure practical purposes." It is in no sense a speculative or metaphysical knowledge; it contains nothing about the nature of its object. Out of practical ideas "we can form no conception that would help to the knowledge of the

<sup>1</sup> Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by Th. K. Abbott, 3d ed., London, 1883, p. 200.

object"; they "can never be used for a theory of supernatural beings, so that on this side they are quite incapable of being the foundation of a speculative knowledge, and their use is limited simply to the practice of the moral law."<sup>2</sup>

This famous doctrine proclaiming the "primacy of the practical reason" is even more significant with respect to Kant's protestant outlook than is the refutation of all speculative theology. As Luther stressed the primacy of faith against any objective guarantee on the part of man, so Kant defended the primacy of faith against any objective knowledge of God. Of course, Luther and Kant do not mean the same thing when they speak of faith. Luther means belief in the word of God as revealed in Scripture, especially in the Gospel; Kant means rational faith. But despite this difference, which must be examined carefully, there is common ground for both Luther and Kant to stand on. Both mean by faith a relation of man to God, not founded on objective facts but rather on our conscience; both mean a practical relation, i.e., a relation which concerns primarily man's will in its moral aspect; both mean, therefore, something that affects a person as a person and not something that would satisfy the human intellect or reason in general.

This is expressed by Kant when he says that the belief in God is a belief for "the pure practical purpose" of promoting morality, that this belief is based upon the consciousness of duty, and that, therefore, the validity of this belief cannot be separated from a personal moral attitude toward life and reality. ". . . Admitting that the pure moral law inexorably binds every man as a command (not as a rule of prudence), the righteous man may say: I *will* that there be a God, . . .; I firmly abide by this, and

<sup>2</sup> l.c. p. 235.

will not let this faith be taken from me; for in this instance alone my interest, because I *must* not relax anything of it, inevitably determines my judgement. . . ."<sup>3</sup> It is an interest of mine in so far as I am a moral person striving after moral ideals. It is a subjective personal interest; but it is not a merely personal, i.e., a selfish interest, rather an *interest of morality*, i.e., of moral reason. This interest, not a theoretical insight or a proof of any other intellectual surety determines my judgment. I, as a "righteous man," involved in moral duties, believe in God. The requirement of reason in this case is of a personal kind, it depends, as Kant says, on a "subjective condition of reason." Kant's doctrine of moral belief in God thus appears to be the first step in the doctrine of Kierkegaard that not thought but the existent thinker alone can be related to God; that not a philosophic system but the living man alone, the sinner and he who repents, can judge about the existence of God; that the standpoint of the believing man, therefore, must always be "existential."

Kant himself felt that his doctrine was in complete agreement with the Christian conception of faith. Whether or not he is right in this respect we shall consider soon. In any case he approached the Christian faith by emphasizing the moral character of our belief in God, and by concluding that God must be represented as the moral Author of the world. The idea of God, as interpreted by moral reason, is the idea of the head of the moral kingdom, of the highest moral lawgiver and judge who rules over man's conscience; God, thus conceived of, is the only warrantor for a just agreement between our moral worth and our happiness. God is not the first cause or ruler of the physical Universe as Aristotle taught. He is first of all the Lord in relation to us as willing persons

<sup>3</sup> l.c. p. 241.

subject to the moral law. Kant, however, is, even in this point, not as remote from the old speculative theology as he himself seems to have assumed. The idea of God traditionally united both the theoretical and the practical reason, and it is hard to say which reason, theoretical or practical, was superior in Aristotle, in the medieval thinkers, and in modern representatives of natural religion. All these had a practical interest as outlined by Kant, when they conceived of God. It is true Kant was the first to advance in the direction of an "existential" standpoint, and so in the direction of a religious and not only a theological philosophy. But on the other hand, the idea of God as the lawgiver, judge, and governor of the moral world and as the moral Author of the Universe as a whole is as old as the attempts to create a Christian philosophy. And it might even be said that the primacy of the moral reason was first proclaimed by Plato, who taught that the idea of the Good had the highest rank in the realm of ideas. And it may be recalled also that Aristotle's God moves the world not as a physical agent or force, but by means of that love toward Him which lives in all things and in all beings, and which is motivated by the idea that He represents the highest good, *summum bonum*.

Finally it should be added that medieval thinkers, such as Duns Scotus and Occam, had come rather near Kant's standpoint. They limited or even rejected the right and realm of speculative theology in order to "make room for faith" like Kant; they opposed philosophy and theology as theoretical and practical disciplines; and they asserted that the will and not the intellect should be made the center of metaphysics as it is the center of man. Of course, there is one weighty difference between these Catholic thinkers and Kant: they based their positions on revealed

religion, not on "practical reason"; their theology was "practical," because they held that spiritual love toward God and not ethical reflection was the root of faith and of all theological wisdom. It remains to be considered whether they were perhaps nearer the truth than Kant.

Kant rejects speculative theology, but he substitutes for it "ethico-theology." He is sufficiently akin to the deists and the defenders of a "natural religion" to renew their tenet, but he renews it on a new level and with superior means of thought. Rational religion is no longer permitted as the result of theoretical insights, nor as the product of an aesthetic or pseudo-aesthetic contemplation of the Universe, but it must be based upon moral reason; it is conceived as a religion of the moral will, as a strictly moral religion, or as a religion that has morality as its kernel. While the deists and rationalists of the eighteenth century had confused philosophic thought with religious faith, Kant reestablishes the stern meaning of faith as distinguished from all intellectual, aesthetic or mystical contemplation. He rediscovers the root of faith in the non-intellectual faculty of man's mind, but he still insists that a rational faculty, "pure practical reason" is the genuine and legitimate source of faith. Though not intellectual, religion at its best is a "pure rational faith." This faith originates from the fact that practical reason is superior to the intellect and to theoretical reason with respect to the knowledge of God. Kant calls this superiority the *primacy of practical reason*.

As far as speculative elements are acknowledged in pure rational faith, they have no meaning of their own, no properly speculative, i.e., theoretical value; in other words, they do not pretend to express any truth concerning the nature of God; they have a practical meaning only,



they concern man's moral relation to God. The existence of God cannot be proved by logical arguments, but it can be proved by moral reflections. Man is morally entitled and even required to believe in a moral Author of the world. Such a belief answers a rational and, therefore, not whimsical or merely subjective need. This rational propensity must be carefully distinguished from all other human wishes, inclinations, desires, interests, and so on. It is *a need of pure practical reason itself*. We, as human beings, are obliged to obey the moral law. Such an obedience would be deprived of its meaning, if the world in which we live and discharge our duties, were devoid of a moral purpose. As moral beings we belong at the same time to a natural and to a moral order. This duplicity is the source of the requirement of a moral belief in God not only as the Lawgiver but also as the first cause of nature.

Moral belief alone can assure us that obedience to the law and the pursuit of happiness are ultimately in harmony. We ourselves in obeying the moral law cannot bring about this harmony, since the supreme principle of morality excludes all merely utilitarian motives. Morality is not expediency. In man's life these can clash with each other. But it is just and therefore required by morality itself that man obtain happiness in adequate proportion to his moral conduct and value; to put it in another way: the good man should enjoy a good life. The highest good, consisting in such a state of balance between moral virtue and happiness, cannot be achieved without the help of a moral power which is at the same time a power over nature. This power must be absolute or unrestricted: it must command matter and form of the phenomenal world; and it must be the power of a morally unrestricted or perfect will, i.e., the omnipotent will of the moral

Author of the world, or God. The belief in the existence of God is thus "postulated" by moral reason.

This is the "moral proof of the existence of God" which must supersede the rejected speculative proofs. "In this manner the moral laws lead through the conception of the *summum bonum* as the object and final end of pure practical reason to religion, that is, to the recognition of all duties as divine commands. They do this, not as sanctions, that is to say, arbitrary ordinances of a foreign will, contingent in themselves, but as essential laws of every free will in itself; but, nevertheless, they must be regarded as commands of the Supreme Being, because we can hope to attain the *summum bonum* which the moral law imposes upon us, only from a morally perfect (holy and good), and at the same time all-powerful, will, and consequently only through harmony with this will."<sup>4</sup> When we isolate the kernel of Kant's argument, it runs thus: The opposition between nature and morality, between the world of sense in space and time and the world of our duties, between the objective realm of things and processes and the subjective realm of persons and actions, or between the field in which the laws of nature are carried through by means of necessity and the field in which the laws of morality are to be carried through by means of freedom—this opposition cannot be ultimately valid. There must be an ultimate reality which is not affected by this duality; which is the unbroken whole of reality; which is subject to the laws of necessity and at the same time to the laws of freedom. This ultimate reality cannot be conceived of save as the Creation of the Creator-God.

This "proof" starts from the world of moral beings, and proceeds to God. It is a special kind of cosmological proof: an ethico-cosmological one. The spirit of this proof

<sup>4</sup> I.c. p. 226 (translation slightly altered).

resembles the way in which Kant demonstrates the necessity of the transcendental ideal in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There Kant demonstrates that the idea of an original unity of matter and form in an *ens realissimum* must be assumed. This idea represents the perfect truth of objective knowledge. Here Kant concludes that an original unity of nature (as matter) and morality (as form of the human will) is to be assumed. This idea represents the highest good as the goal of all human striving. In spite of this resemblance Kant insists that theoretical or speculative reason cannot demonstrate the existence of God, while pure practical reason can "postulate" this existence. There is an ambiguity in these expressions, because the word "God" does not mean the same thing in both cases. The existence of God cannot be demonstrated in the field of theoretical speculation, because the idea of God implies more than can be predicated by pure reason: it implies moral perfection or holiness. On the other hand, the existence of God, in so far as He is conceived as the *ens realissimum*, the being that contains logical perfection, is, if not demonstrated, nonetheless *postulated* by pure theoretical reason in much the same way as the existence of God, as the moral Author of the world is postulated by pure practical reason. Is the difference between demonstration and postulation to be maintained? And is it true that the practical phase of reason alone is capable of reaching God as God? These questions require cautious discussion.

First of all, it must be inquired whether the idea of God as the moral Author of the world is legitimately conceived. Is this idea a product of practical reason alone? Obviously not. Nor does Kant himself suggest it. On the contrary, he speaks "of the primacy of pure practical reason in its union with the speculative reason." Indeed,

practical reason alone is not able to reason about the feasibility of the *summum bonum* and about the possible and necessary presuppositions of its achievement. This reasoning transcends the bounds of the moral realm and moves toward a unification of theoretical and practical reason and their respective objects. Pure practical or moral reason alone does not "reason," i.e., speculate, about our mental powers, nor about a possible unification of nature and morality. Pure practical reason thinks in terms of the moral law, of duties and obligations, of right and wrong, and so on; it reasons about the moral character of purposes and ends, of persons and acts. It philosophizes about all these terms and concepts in general. But it transcends the moral realm in the strict sense of this word and approaches the "metaphysical" or theological realm as soon as it philosophizes about the relationship between the totality of all natural objects (the *ens realissimum*) and the idea of the highest good and its possible achievement.

One cannot be quite sure whether Kant realized that the unification of practical and speculative reason is a kind of self-unification of the philosophizing reason or of the thinking mind functioning as a whole. It is the same thinking mind which speculates about the transcendental ideal and about the *summum bonum*, and achieves a measure of integrity in the union of speculative and moral reason. To speak precisely and accurately, it is not the union of speculative and moral reason that is required, but the speculative union of epistemology and of ethics. It is the same speculative reason in both fields. This reason aims at its union in the field of ethico-theology. And therefore it is not *pure* practical reason that proclaims the prerogative in its union with the speculative reason, but it is the *speculative* moral reason that proclaims the pre-

rogative in its union with the likewise *speculative* theoretical reason. This statement perhaps sounds pedantic and formalistic; but it is important and of great consequence.

The primacy of the speculative practical reason means that the interest of morality is destined to prevail over the interest of scientific knowledge in the speculative field common to both. Kant argues that interest is always practical and that, therefore, the interest of the practical reason is the proper interest of reason. That is true; but it is also true that the interest of practical reason is practical and speculative as well. It is the interest of morality that is at stake; but it is this interest that seeks an alliance with and the help of speculation, not as Kant suggests the help of theoretical knowledge. As Kant does not discriminate sharply enough between scientific-theoretical and speculative-theoretical (epistemological) knowledge, it happens that he speaks of the union between practical and speculative reason as if the union between practical and scientific-theoretical knowledge were to be effected. Consequently he conceives of the unity between morality and nature as if the question of the *cause* of nature were to be answered. He thus applies the category of causality, which has its appropriate place in scientific knowledge and in the realm of empirical objects, for the purpose of unifying theoretical and practical reason in such a way that the cause of nature insures a harmony between happiness and morality.

Is this application of the category of causality justified? Is it necessary and possible to think of the harmony between nature and the ideal of the *summum bonum* in terms of "a cause of all nature, distinct from nature itself and containing the principle of this connexion"?<sup>5</sup> In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant restricts the use of the cate-

<sup>5</sup> l.c. p. 221.

gories to the realm of empirical objects, and he accordingly dismisses the possibility of applying the category of causality outside the field of objective experience. The cosmological antinomies show that both the thesis: "There belongs to the world, either as its part or as its cause, a being that is absolutely necessary," and the antithesis: "An absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause" can be demonstrated.<sup>6</sup> This antinomy originates in the unrestricted use of the category. Is this unrestricted use of the category of causality permitted for the sake of the union of practical and theoretical reason?

Kant's answer is unequivocal. He says: yes, such unrestricted use is permitted for the sake of this union, but for a restricted purpose only, namely for a purely practical one. For this purpose the thesis alone is valid. There is a significant difference between thesis and antithesis according to Kant's *Critique*. The thesis concerns the problem of the relation between the phenomenal and the intelligible world, or between the realm of empirical objects in space and time and the thing in itself, or in other words the problem of the *transcendental ideal* or of the *ens realissimum*. The antithesis results from the standpoint of empirical knowledge only, or from the scientific empirical standpoint. Therefore, the thesis, says Kant, arouses "a certain practical interest in which every right thinking man . . . heartily shares." Further, "reason has a speculative interest on the side of the thesis." "Thirdly, the thesis has also the advantage of popularity," for "common understanding finds not the least difficulty in the idea of the unconditioned beginning of all synthesis." The antithesis, on the other hand, represents the standpoint of empiricism and of natural science.<sup>7</sup> But how can

<sup>6</sup> Cr. of P.R. B 480, 481.

<sup>7</sup> B 494 ff.

the interest of practical reason, the interest of speculation, and the advantage of popularity make valid what the *Critique* rejects? The *Critique* prepares the way for such a validation by saying that the thesis, though not conclusive, cannot be refuted by the antithesis, for the thesis concerns the ultimate condition of the existence of appearances altogether, while the antithesis does not refer to this problem in any way.

The mere statement that the thesis cannot be ultimately refuted obviously does not suffice to validate its assertion or to clarify its conception. It is the practical interest that achieves this validation according to Kant's teaching. But there is one point in this trend of Kant's thought which is noteworthy. When Kant shifts from the representation of the antinomies to their consideration and finally to their solution the word "cause" used in both the thesis and antithesis disappears and is replaced by the words "ground" or "condition." And this is not only a linguistic alteration, nor is it accidental or superficial; it is founded on an alteration of thought also. The interest of speculation, as distinguished from the standpoint of the scientific, theoretical understanding, demands that the category of causality be no longer applied to express this relation, since it is in no way comparable with the relation of cause and effect in the empirical world. Explicitly in one passage Kant says, that "we are concerned here, not with unconditioned *causality*, but with the unconditioned *existence of substance* itself."<sup>8</sup> And in another passage he remarks: "This way of conceiving how an unconditioned being may serve as the ground [*sic!*] of appearance differs from that which we followed in the preceding section, in dealing with the empirically unconditioned causality of freedom. For there the thing itself was as cause (*substantia phae-*

<sup>8</sup> B 587 (my italics).

*nomenon*) conceived to belong to the series of conditions, and only its *causality* was thought as intelligible. Here, on the other hand, the necessary being must be thought of as entirely outside the series of the sensible world (as *ens extramundanum*), and as purely intelligible. In no other way can it be secured against the law which renders all appearances contingent and dependent.”<sup>9</sup>

These quotations are very interesting. The second one refers to the problem of man's free will. Man considered as a moral being does not belong to the world of appearance only; he is not only an object of sensation and perception, of theoretical experience and scientific investigation; he is primarily a “thing-in-itself,” or something that does not only appear to our senses, but that really (“Existentially”) exists. Man as a moral being stands on the same level as the human understanding or as reason, but at the same time he belongs to the apparent world, he is an individual animal. This peculiar situation makes it possible and necessary to think of man as a creature acting in space and time, like other causal agents, but with the remarkable difference that he acts as a free will in so far as he acts as a morally responsible person. Here, therefore, the category of *causality* must be applied, although man as cause is not properly a cause, but rather an *author* of his actions. Being the author of his actions man is no longer necessitated to act by other causes, he himself is the only and ultimate cause of his actions, the *first cause*. As such a first cause man is not a phenomenal, but an “intelligible” being. But the effects of his action, nay, even his action itself as distinguished from him, belong to the phenomenal world of objects. Man, in other words, is an *ens mundanum* and *extramundanum* at the same time, whereas the suggested “cause” of nature is not an *ens*

<sup>9</sup> B 589 (Kant's italics).



*mundanum*, but solely and exclusively an *ens extramundanum*. Man can be called a cause or an author, because he belongs to both worlds, the apparent or phenomenal and the intelligible or noumenal world. The transcendental ideal or the *ens realissimum*, on the contrary, does not belong to the phenomenal world at all but to the noumenal sphere alone. Therefore reason is not entitled to speak of it as a *cause* or an *author*, but as the supreme *condition* or *ground* of the possibility and the existence of all appearances only.

Despite these subtle but important distinctions made in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant speaks in the *Critique of Practical Reason* of the "cause of nature," and justifies this conception by the additional restriction concerning the merely practical use of it. But can this restriction rehabilitate a concept annihilated by critical speculation? I think that reason, whether practical or theoretical, as long as it remains reason alone, unsupported by religious intuition and imagination, is not entitled, and not able, to postulate the existence of a cause of nature, not even when this cause is conceived of as the moral author of the world in which we, as moral beings, live. It is obvious that not pure practical reason alone, but the *biblical image of the Creator* led Kant to propose that reason postulates the existence of God as the Author of the world. Kant, I would suggest, is right in defending a certain correspondence of this biblical image with pure practical reason, but he is not right in asserting that reason alone can postulate and justify this image as a rational idea or as a concept which needs no imagination to be engendered. Whereas Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* does not fully appreciate the ability of reason to obtain positive results, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* he overrates the productive power of this same faculty.

Both the completely negative verdict about theology in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the excessively positive verdict of the *Critique of Practical Reason* seem to be consistent with each other. In the former, Kant does not allow any theoretical theology at all, because there he has in mind only empirical knowledge; and in the latter, he allows merely practical knowledge of God, because he regards it as the only substitute for the previously criticised speculative theology. In both cases Kant is too little metaphysical (ontological). He denies the possibility of any rational or natural theology, because he, first of all, does not acknowledge the true character of speculation as being distinguished from theoretical knowledge of objects, and because, secondly, he does not acknowledge that ethical and ethico-theological speculation, though it be not theoretical in the sense of empirical sciences, nevertheless is theoretical in the sense of philosophical thought.

To be sure, Kant is right in a way, that man's adequate attitude toward God is not theoretical, but practical, and that, therefore, the knowledge of God has a practical, and not a merely theoretical function, or as Kant likes to say, "purpose." But this important thesis also is not fully developed and clarified within the Kantian philosophy; and, therefore, its truth is not entirely clear. It remains obscure, because Kant is too rationalistic a thinker to descry the function of religious imagination. Kant approaches a right appreciation of the non-philosophical, non-speculative nature of religion, but he ruins his doctrine eventually by his conception of rational faith.

It is quite true, that in and by faith man's intellect and will are more deeply united than in any other region of his mind. But this unification is accomplished as little by practical as by theoretical reason. It is accomplished not by reason at all, but by imagination. Thus prophetic in-

spiration and divine revelation can be understood in their specific purport, whereas in the Kantian interpretation they lose their meaning and appear as obstacles of pure, rational faith. While Kant recognized clearly enough the superrational meaning of the *beautiful* and of creations in the realm of *art*, he did not succeed in rating the superrational in the realm of *religion* at its true value. He overcame rationalistic prejudices in analyzing the peculiar contribution of the man of *genius*, but he yielded to them in the case of the *prophet*. This is the deficiency of his philosophy seen by so many critics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; but none of these critics tried to supplement what is missing, and to supply philosophy with an appropriate theory of religious imagination and inspiration.

The deficiency of Kant's views is rooted in his concept of man as being composed of nature and reason. Thus the unity of mind, soul, and heart, the unity of the individual could not be rightly appraised and interpreted. Kant always fails to understand man when he meets this unity. In the field of aesthetics he attained more than anywhere else to a just comprehension because here the theoretical powers of sensation and intellect join each other and a new synthesis, not achieved in the theoretical sphere, is here produced. In the religious field the synthesis concerns not only the theoretical faculties, but intellect and will, theoretical and practical procedure. There Kant's moralism prevailed and made an alliance with his rationalism to defeat the supermoral and superrational powers operative in revelation and inspiration, in mystical intuition, and prophetic imagination. Thus spiritual values in their proper form remained hidden from him.

On the other hand, Kant underrated the speculative elements presented by his own ethico-theological theory. He

did not realize that this theory represents a contribution to the despised and allegedly destroyed natural theology! The germ of such a theology appears in the transcendental ideal. But the idea of God is not confined to the idea of a perfect *intellect* that produces the content of its knowledge in a creative way; it is at once the idea of a perfect *will*, only in this combination the idea of God is completed. Both the perfect intellect and the perfect will exceed the functions and the potentiality of human intellect and will. God is not only the consummation of knowledge, He is at the same time the ultimate goal of knowledge, i.e., absolute *truth*; and He is not only the perfect will, but also the ultimate goal of the will, i.e., the absolute *good*, the *summum bonum*. Thus the Aristotelian idea of God would have been reinterpreted by Kant.

But Kant misses the full reward of his critical inquiries, because he confuses natural theology and rational faith. He substitutes rational faith for natural theology. Instead of qualifying the nature of knowledge achieved by onto- and ethico-theological speculation Kant takes refuge in the device of a faith that is neither really rational nor a real faith, as Spinoza in a similar dialectical situation took refuge in the concept of an intellectual love that was neither really intellectual nor a real love. Kant was driven to this subterfuge because he rightly recognized the problematic character of the speculative idea of God, on the one hand, and, on the other, rightly felt that faith supplemented this problematic idea in a legitimate way. But he neither succeeded in granting to speculation what belongs to it, nor in recognizing the true nature of faith.

Natural theology, to be sure, must be restricted because the idea of God, even in the critical form of Kant's ethico-theology, contains insoluble problems that make the very concept problematic. An intellect that produces its own

object is no longer an intellect; a will that produces its final purpose can no longer be conceived of as a will. In both cases the analogy breaks down. An analogical knowledge is not strictly knowledge; it resembles the imaginative knowledge of religious revelation without reaching its level. It lies between a legitimate conceptual and a legitimate imaginative knowledge. But the idea has, as Kant says, the function of a regulative principle. It indicates the direction in which we must seek ultimate truth without ever being enabled to find it. We need this idea as the point toward which all knowledge must move; but this point also signifies the definite end of all human intellectual endeavor. At the uttermost frontier of reason and speculation, unanswerable questions arise. Reason needs to be supplemented. This supplement is granted, not by postulates and rational belief, but by faith, in the genuine sense of the word.

I will conclude the discussion of Kant's doctrine by adding some remarks about the negative part of this statement. It is an illusion that we should attain to a rational content of faith. If no other way were open to faith in God, we could never reach it at all. Kant errs in thinking that the moral proof of the existence of God is more conclusive than the ontological and epistemological proofs; in assuming that the restrictive epithet "for the practical purpose" can excuse or improve the inherent frailty of the concepts used in the proof. He errs from the very outset in pronouncing that moral reason can postulate the existence of God.

The meaning of the term "postulate" is not quite clear in Kant's exposition, and this lack of clearness is significant. Kant uses the term in two different ways. He says that pure practical reason postulates the *existence* of God, but also that it postulates the *belief* in God. These dif-

ferent meanings should be carefully distinguished. Under the title: *The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason*<sup>10</sup> Kant explains the first meaning. A postulate, we learn, is a practical supposition or assumption. To postulate the existence of God is as much as to assert, that "it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God."<sup>11</sup> In this entire trend of thought the postulate is also called "rational faith."<sup>12</sup> It implies faith, because the necessity of the assumption is not theoretical, but practical. We are not entitled to state: "There is a God," as if this statement were a sufficiently ascertained proposition; we are rather merely entitled (and even required morally) to say: "I believe that God exists." The character of the certainty is not that of an assertion, but that of an assumption; and an assumption founded upon a moral interest and requirement does not express a mere hypothesis or an unverified probability, but it expresses rather a certainty "for practical purposes," a practical belief in the truth of its content. The postulate itself is thus rational faith in God.

But this interpretation of Kant's famous doctrine is not the only one; there is a second meaning of the term "postulate," suggesting that not the existence of God, but rather the belief in this existence, is the real content of the postulate; or that the necessity leading to the assumption of this existence is the necessity of the postulate. According to this version one division has the title: *Of Belief from a Requirement of Pure Reason*.<sup>13</sup> If we follow this line of exposition, we must conclude that not the *postulate*, as such, but rather the postulated *assumption* or admission is the essence of rational faith.

<sup>10</sup> Book II, ch. II, division V; l.c. p. 220.

<sup>11</sup> l.c. p. 222.

<sup>12</sup> l.c. p. 223.

<sup>13</sup> Book II, ch. II, division VIII; l.c. p. 240.

Both interpretations of Kant's doctrine, however, are unsatisfactory and their very duality hints at an inner uncertainty and ambiguity of the entire theory. A postulate has not the true character of faith. Belief, in the religious sense, includes trust, fear, hope, longing, love, and similar affections, and they do not postulate but rather presuppose the existence of God. Faith, therefore, cannot be interpreted as postulation. It is a kind of devotion, of confidence, of loyalty, of reverence. Not (as Kant teaches) the postulation: "I will that there be a God . . ." renders the true meaning of faith, but the prayer: "Not my will, but thine, be done." On the other hand, belief itself cannot be postulated by reason either. To be sure, a certain agreement between morality and faith exists. Faith in God as the guarantor of a moral world order presupposes the validity of the moral law and is partly based on this validity. It is thus a reasonable faith; one might say, it is suggested by moral reason. But a suggestion is not a postulation. If anyone is able to postulate religious belief, not man and his moral reason, but God alone can do it.

There is no moral proof of the existence of God. Faith cannot be demonstrated, either as a postulate or as postulated. It is neither an act nor a product of reason. It transcends reason altogether, though it is in agreement with morality, and promotes morality. The content of faith may be reasonable, but it is certainly not rational. The idea of a moral Author of nature is not the result of merely ethical argumentations, not even of combined ethical and ontological considerations. This failure becomes even more obvious, when we pay attention to the problem of evil. It is not appropriate to say: "I will that there is a God," even if we suppose (as Kant does) that it is a righteous man who speaks; it is certainly still less appro-

priate, if we take into consideration that man is never absolutely righteous. The sinner offends God by the very acts he performs. How can he venture to say: "I will that there is a God"? The principle of the primacy of practical reason cannot warrant the existence of a moral world order, much less the existence of a moral author of the world. Faith alone can assure this existence. Faith, not moral reason, ultimately has the primacy.



## CHAPTER IV

### *The Nature of Evil*

THE PROBLEM of evil is central in every attempt at a philosophical theology. Evil is the most obvious, the most pressing sign of imperfection. The idea of God, however we may define it, implies the element of perfection. It is easy to explain evil, if no God exists; it would be easy to maintain the existence of God, if no evil existed. Both together cause the greatest difficulties in thought. Even when we eliminate the problem of evil in general, especially when we exclude the sufferings of innocent people, the remaining problem of moral evil, as such, is hard enough. The world in which man succumbs to temptations, in which wickedness of all sorts and all degrees is not a rare but a common occurrence, is certainly an utterly imperfect world. How can this imperfection be brought into harmony with the existence of God? By no means through rational postulation and rational belief. What could be more irrational than this state of affairs? Many theistic thinkers take this obstacle much too lightly. When they insist that all existence is the revelation of God, they seem completely to forget that all existence includes the most cruel tyrants and the most horrible acts of criminals, not to mention the general corruption of man. Not philosophy, but revelation alone, can overcome the contrast between the idea of an omnipotent moral God and the reality of moral imperfection. And no religion has found a more paradoxical, but also a more profound solution of this conflict, than Christianity.

Can philosophy contribute anything to the discussion of the problem of moral evil? Is it possible to reconcile the idea of a morally perfect God with the fact of moral imperfection by means of thought without taking refuge in religion? Or, should this prove impossible, can philosophy approach the solution of the Christian faith without abandoning the ground of unbiased reflection? Is there any bridge between philosophy and religion built by philosophy? These are questions of such a tremendous import and weight that it would be rash to venture a satisfying answer in a short course of lectures. But perhaps we can try to clarify the questions themselves and to outline the possibility of an answer.

The problem of moral evil at first concerns man. Philosophy cannot begin with an apprehension of God. There is no immediate knowledge of God save by means of religious experience, and this experience must be interpreted in order to be available for philosophic needs. It is true that philosophy must aim at the knowledge of God from the outset, but it can attain such knowledge only after a long search. Philosophy must analyze the situation in which we live as men; it must try to determine what man is and means, before it can explore what place and function the idea of God has to fill. The Bible begins with God and proceeds to man, philosophy pursues an opposite course. Although God is first in the order of reason, man is first in the order of knowledge based on immediate experience. Although we cannot reach perfect knowledge about man without proceeding to the idea of God, nevertheless we must ask what man is in order to find the right way to the idea of God. There can be no doubt that the idea of man and the idea of God are closely bound together, that neither has significance without the other. Nevertheless man is nearer to our sources than is God;

our immediate experience is an experience of ourselves. Even the experience of God is *our* experience. Even revelation addresses *man*, and the understanding of it is dependent upon the capacity and the mental condition of *man*. Therefore man is the first problem.

Admitting this, we can accept Kant's doctrine of the primacy of practical reason. Practical reason is the reason which controls human conduct. Ethics is the science of man. A concept of God is necessarily ethical. Though ontology and epistemology also culminate in this concept, ethics has priority, as Kant taught, for ethics opens a new horizon which embraces the field of ontology and epistemology and places the problems therein unsolved in a broader perspective. God, as experienced in religion, is primarily concerned with man's moral vocation and destiny. He is not so much a God of nature, as a God of man. He is not the natural cause of natural phenomena but the supreme judge of moral deeds. Even as the creator and as the ruler of the world He is Providence, i.e., the moral government of the course of life. Religions which look at God as involved primarily in nature and secondarily with man's moral affairs are pagan and inferior to the moral religion of the Bible. But these considerations alone do not suffice; they indicate the direction of our inquiry, but they have no demonstrative power; they cannot convince the man who has no religious sense, nor him who denies the superiority of the Christian religion as compared with mythological substitutes. The number of such people, it may be sadly admitted, is greater today than it has ever been during the twenty centuries of the Christian era.

The crucial problem which determines one's standpoint in metaphysics is the problem of evil. In this problem culminate all questions concerning the idea of God. All the difficulties of thought in the field of speculative the-

ology assume their sharpest form herein. It is not merely the physical frailty of man, nor even man's ignorance, that demands the idea of perfection; it is most of all man's moral frailty that suggests the concept of an ideal toward which we can and must strive, but which we can never reach. Although we are not entitled to postulate the existence of God, as Kant holds, we, as morally imperfect beings, long for the existence of the morally perfect being that combines with His moral perfection an equal perfection of causal power to carry out the moral ends which we are unable to accomplish. This longing in itself can scarcely suffice to convince us that such a powerful being exists and governs the world. We have no right to "postulate" His existence, as long as we ourselves deny His existence by our own transgressions. We long for a full reconciliation with God. It would be absurd to postulate the existence of a being that grants us such a reconciliation; we can beg for, and hope for grace or mercy, but we cannot postulate their giver. This consideration suggests the necessity of seeking a sphere beyond moral reason for the idea of God. Perhaps it is altogether impossible to demonstrate the existence of God in a way that could satisfy the need of a devout heart. But still it should not be impossible to grasp the idea by means of speculation, to determine the content of the idea and to discover the function of the idea in man's inner economy, without appealing to revelation.

Before we can decide upon such a possibility we must inquire into the nature of evil. The consciousness of evil has developed apace with man's cultural progress since the days of antiquity. It is in the Christian world, as we might well expect, that this consciousness has become most acute, and, as a result, man's conscience most refined and sensitive. In a discussion of the difference between the

ancient and Christian outlooks, Hegel says the Greeks still lived "in the paradise of the human mind." They conceived of evil as not essentially different from other deficiencies or privations in nature. As every entity in the world fails to express fully the idea of its nature, because it is composed of material and formal elements, and because matter always impedes the pure and perfect realization of the form or idea, so man also, as an individual, does not represent the idea of man, but deviates more or less from his archetype.

Although Aristotle proclaims that there is an important difference between man and every other animal, because man is *rational*, this difference does not mean that man stands outside nature. Rather his moral frailty is nothing but a lack of natural perfection. To be sure, Aristotle expressly declares that man is not good or evil by *nature*, but by *reason*.<sup>1</sup> This statement, however, does not intend to exempt man from the world of substances and to elevate him to the level of beings who can determine themselves instead of being determined by their nature or their idea. On the contrary, men fulfill their nature, the idea of their species, when they live a good life, and they fail when they do not follow the course determined by their nature. Aristotle looks at man as a part of the world, as a particular substance within the world. His philosophy knows no opposition between man and world; he does not see that man is man, and not merely animal, because he stands outside the world of substances; that he can make the world of substances and forms his object of knowledge because, and only because, he can take his standpoint outside the natural sphere. Aristotle, in other words, does not understand the character of man as a subject or a self in opposition to all other things.

<sup>1</sup> *Eth Nic.* 1103a18 ff., 1106a8 ff.

The Greeks lived in the Eden of the human mind; they had not yet experienced the rupture between nature and man; they were still in harmony with the world of apparent things and beings. They did not yet realize that man's inward nature is not to be compared with the idea or the "form" of apparent objects. It is true that Socrates and Plato seem to be on the way to this discovery, but Aristotle renews with the greatest emphasis and vigor the old belief in the harmony between man and the universe of sense. That is the meaning of Aristotle's empiricism as against Plato's idealism. It is an irony of history that Aristotle was the one who became the model philosopher for Christian thinkers. Origen and Augustine who followed the Platonic scheme were much nearer to the Christian soul than the medieval Aristotelians.

The belief in the harmony between man and nature influenced not only the ontological, cosmological, and epistemological outlook of Aristotle, but also his view concerning man's destiny and vocation. He (like Plato) not only compares human vice and corruption with physical disease, he describes the nature of both phenomena in equivalent terms. Depravity of the will, says Aristotle, gives the impression of a disease like dropsy and consumption, lack of self-control the impression of convulsions.<sup>2</sup> Even the expression virtue (*ἀρετή*) is used by Plato and Aristotle not exclusively in the modern sense of the word, namely for man's moral goodness, but also for the proper development and natural excellence of organic functions. Moral virtue thus is only the excellence of a special substance, namely the human soul, as sight is the virtue of the eye. To be sure, Aristotle describes with care and thoroughness the peculiarity of man's virtue or his lack of it, but this description is analogous to his description of other

<sup>2</sup> *Eth. Nic.* 1150b32f., comp. 1102b18.

animals and plants. Man is just a peculiar animal, the highest in rank, because he has reason, the highest of all faculties or gifts. This difference is one of degree only, not of the quality of the sphere to which man belongs. Aristotle does not reflect on the inwardness and subjectivity of the human soul, either in the field of knowledge or in the field of volition and conduct. Therefore he does not appreciate the sort of evil described in the idea of sin. Evil action is based on an intellectual failure, not on an evil will. It is the consequence of an incapability or unfitness, not of an evil decision; it concerns the attitude and the behavior of man as a rational animal, but not the kernel of his self. Man can act in a false way, but such action does not betray an evil heart, an evil *person*, because the very concept of a person (in the moral sense of this term) is unknown to the Greeks.

The entire ethical theory of Aristotle is an illustration of this fundamental outlook. Aristotle seeks a measure for the difference of good and evil action and he finds this measure in the famous doctrine of the right mean or proportion. This doctrine is a splendid example of the peculiar Greek mentality, both of its keenness and of its limits. The doctrine considers human attitude and conduct as if they were objects of contemplation only, and establishes the rule of the right mean in analogy to an aesthetic principle. Indeed, the very concept of the right mean is the concept of aesthetic harmony or symmetry. Man should act in accordance with such aesthetic canons. If he does so, he is morally good, or more precisely his action is morally good; if he fails to do so, his conduct is bad.

In introducing the theory Aristotle adduces analogies with physical health. Too strenuous gymnastic exercises are as useless for the purpose of physical development as

those which are too light; excess in food and drink is as harmful as malnutrition; so also excess of feeling produces rashness, deficiency of feeling cowardice, and a moderate amount of feeling alone produces courage, a virtue. The same holds true of the other kinds of moral conduct.<sup>3</sup> Correct proportion produces and preserves health in the physical and in the moral sphere as well. Aristotle thus closely connects the physical and the moral "good," or the organically useful and the morally right. He draws no sharp line between physical health and moral virtue, as he draws no sharp line between aesthetic and moral values. Usually he applies the word "beautiful" (καλός) where we would say "good." The outer phenomenon, not the inner nature of morality, is the subject of his reflections and his ethics.

His concept of evil concerns conduct or action primarily. In order to act rightly we need knowledge of right action. He who does not act as virtue demands either has not the right knowledge or does not apply it in the right way. In both cases reason fails to control the impulses and the passions. Evil springs from the failure of reason or of practical insight. Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato, shares the Greek belief in the supremacy of the intellect. A man who has recognized what is beautiful or good will prefer it, for the morally good life leads to the ultimate end of man's natural desire, namely to happiness. No man can choose to miss these goods, no man, therefore, can choose to forfeit the appropriate means for securing this end. It is the lack of insight, knowledge or wisdom which causes all moral lapses. The man who acts basely, says Aristotle, does not know what he ought to do or ought not to do, and only by reason of such a deficiency in his knowledge does a man become bad or unjust.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Eth. Nic.* 1104a10 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Eth. Nic.* 1110b28 ff.



To be sure, Aristotle considers the possibility that a man who judges rightly nevertheless may behave wrongly.<sup>5</sup> He quotes Socrates, who held that there is no such thing as incontinence, and who, therefore, concluded that no one acts against what he judges best, and that a bad action is merely a bad judgment; this doctrine of Socrates, Aristotle objects, plainly contradicts the observed facts. Aristotle is obviously puzzled by this incongruity between the doctrine of Socrates (which is no less the basis of his own theory) and certain facts which seem to be contrary to it. He discusses the problem of this seeming incongruity carefully, but he does not obtain a clear and satisfying solution. He cannot obtain such a solution without abandoning his whole standpoint and admitting a certain contradiction in the phenomenon of evil itself. Such an admission would have revolutionized the whole Greek outlook; it would have involved a distrust in reason and in the harmony between reason and reality. In order to avoid such a discomforting consequence Aristotle comes to the conclusion that a man who acts against his better knowledge resembles a man who acts when he is drunk, i.e., who temporarily does not know what he knows when he is sober. Such a man is, in the popular phrase, "not himself."

Aristotle thus avoids the contradiction by placing the two sides of the phenomenon of evil, namely the knowing of what is right, and the doing of what is wrong, at two different points of time. The man who knows the right and who does the wrong is, though the same man, actually a different man, but at two different moments and under two different sets of circumstances. The man who knows the right, does not act wrongly in so far as he is the knowing man, and the man who acts wrongly, no longer knows

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1145b22 ff. The Greek word means lack of self-control.

the right. It is obvious that this explanation does not interpret the phenomenon which called it forth. This phenomenon concerns just those cases in which a man *acts wrongly although he judges right*. And this is the real phenomenon of evil. The difference between a natural process and moral action consists precisely in the fact that natural processes simply follow one another (or occur simultaneously) in time, whereas the moral agent is a self, embracing different moments or periods of time in one and the same consciousness. Man is a self, because he is responsible for his actions; and he is responsible or can be responsible for his actions only when his personality comprises both earlier and later stages of a sequence. The comparison with the man who is drunk is not conclusive because drunkenness is a natural condition which diminishes man's responsibility.

On the whole, Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato, insists on the identity of moral evil and *error*. The man who acts wickedly is not possessed of the necessary knowledge to act in accordance with his own weal. He errs either because he does not know the truth in general or, when he knows it, because his knowledge is not actually present, or because he does not recognize that the particular situation is to be conceived in terms of the general truth. In all these cases it is not properly the *will* that fails but the insight or the *intellect*. As it is an axiom for the Greek thinker, that everyone seeks his best, and that everyone's best is at the same time what he ought to do, i.e., action in the right proportion; it follows that everyone who is able to recognize the right also does it.

There is some truth in this doctrine. A wise man is supposed to control himself and to act in accordance with his moral principles. He is a man whose knowledge has a practical value also, and whose actions are in harmony

with his general convictions and views. *Wisdom*, indeed, is not knowledge only, it is not only theoretical reason or judgment, it is simultaneously the moral strength to live in agreement with the judgments of the intellect. The Greek hints at this harmony or agreement when he speaks of practical knowledge. Aristotle often uses the word wisdom in this wide sense which comprises both theoretical and practical or moral perfection.

For us the word "wisdom," though still used and highly esteemed, nevertheless no longer has the same significance it had for the Greek consciousness. The Greek sought wisdom by the help of the thinking mind because his religion did not offer to provide it. Socrates, therefore, assumed the role of an Old Testament Prophet, and Plato manifests a prophetic feature in his character. But the peculiar nature of this wisdom rests on the belief that knowledge is the sole means of attaining it. Therefore, the "love of wisdom," or philosophy, is a longing for knowledge, for that knowledge which can lead to a good life. Philosophy is or endeavors to find "the way, the truth and the life." Philosophy is as *theoretical* as it is *practical*. It is the theoretical counterpart of practical accomplishment. The combination of both is wisdom. But the theoretical element is predominant in this combination. It has the primacy, it is leading and controlling. This is the peculiar Greek meaning of wisdom, as distinguished from the same term used in the Old and New Testament where it means to: "Fear God and keep his commandments." The Greek believes that wisdom in the form of *philosophic thought* can find the right way, whereas the Bible teaches that *faith* alone can find it. Our conception of evil depends on whether we share the Greek or the Biblical view; whether we assume that the will can be controlled and informed by way of philosophy or whether

we assume that it has to be controlled by religious faith. Or is there a third possibility? This question remains to be considered later.

The Greek standpoint depends on the conviction that the idea of the good and of the good life does not compel us to transcend the bounds of the cosmos, i.e., of the objective world. Plato hints at a point beyond these bounds when he says that "the good far exceeds essence in dignity and power."<sup>6</sup> But in spite of this intimation Plato remains inside the bounds of the cosmos to which the whole sphere of the ideas belongs. It is true that Plato is nearer to the Christian outlook than Aristotle. He separates the realm of the ideas from the realm of the apparent world. But both realms together make up the cosmos as a whole. The realm of the ideas, the upper realm of the whole cosmos, is as objective as the lower realm of the changing phenomena. It can be contemplated with the inner eye of the mind as the world of sense can be seen by the bodily eye. The world of the ideas is the proper object of philosophical knowledge, and therefore of practical wisdom also. He who contemplates the ideas and acts in accordance with the truth revealed by that contemplation is the man of virtue or of moral worth; he who is determined by the impressions and impulses which the phenomena generate is blind to that truth and therefore morally in error. The philosopher, striving after wisdom, is striving after the good simultaneously, and everyone who strives after the good is so far a philosopher. On the other hand, when we assume that the good compels us to advance beyond the cosmos in its totality, that the good occupies a station "beyond being," then we can no longer hope to discover it by philosophic contemplation; it leads to a sphere beyond human knowledge, to revelation, if no third way is open.

<sup>6</sup> Rep. 509a.



Accordingly evil can no longer be identified with error; it becomes a transgression against the law given by God. It ceases to be primarily an intellectual deficiency and becomes a deficiency of the will; it is no longer due to a lack of knowledge, but instead to a lack of obedience and reverence toward the lawgiver. Not wisdom but faith is now the measure of man's virtue and its absence of his vice. Conscience, that is, a knowledge of good and evil not in terms of general ideas under which the particular case is subsumed, but as an immediate sense of what is commanded, permitted or prohibited in the particular situation, now takes the place of judgment as an intellectual act. (It is characteristic, that the Greeks in classical times had not even a word for conscience.) The voice of conscience as the voice of God is no longer the voice of reason, although reason participates, to be sure, in the moral action by applying the commandments of God to the peculiar circumstances at hand. But this part of reason or intellect is not central in the activity of man; it is only intermediate between the commandments and the decision of the will to act in harmony with them or not.

Philosophic and religious wisdom differ from each other in still another respect. Philosophic wisdom in Plato and Aristotle leads to the good life which is both morally good or virtuous and happy or blessed. In the view of the Bible, on the other hand, the alliance of moral worth and happiness is no longer guaranteed by knowledge. It remains questionable whether the two elements of a good life are inwardly connected with each other. Instead of such an inner connection between them faith assures us that God will reward the good man and punish the wicked. The nature of virtue does not contain in itself the source of happiness, but God connects them. If virtue guarantees happiness, we are able to find out this relationship by analyzing the nature of virtue. This is the central theme

of Plato's philosophy and of Aristotle's ethics and politics. If, on the other hand, virtue does not produce blessedness, then no philosophy whatsoever can find a substitute for the belief in the providential care of a good and just God.

Evil from the biblical standpoint is not a deficiency of knowledge, but of good will. It does not rest on lack of information as to what is good and therefore expedient, but in transgression against God and conscience. Evil appears thus in a darker light. *Errare humanum*. If evil is based on error only, if the doer of evil is only unwise, more or less ignorant, then man himself can learn by himself to avoid evil, as he can learn other arts and acquire other skills. He can improve his moral activity as he improves his science and all types of knowledge. Indeed, moral and non-moral improvements are the same in kind. If, on the other hand, evil is a deficiency of the will and if no knowledge can persuade a man that he destroys his own weal and happiness, when he does evil, then evil appears as a dark fatality. In the light of faith this fatality assumes the character of a revolt against God. If evil consists in the fact that the willing man, though fully aware of the right or the good, nevertheless acts contrarily, then evil takes on a paradoxical cast. Paul gave classical formulation to this paradox. "The good that I will I do not, but the evil that I will not I do." This simple statement plumbs the depths of the problem of evil. Indeed, evil is a greater enigma than the Greek thinkers admitted; they shrank from looking at the irrational nature of man. Man becomes a mystery that cannot easily be explained.

How can it be that man does something which he does not really will to do? How does it come that "the inner man," who, according to Paul wills the good, is separated from the man "in the flesh," who lies "caught in the rule of sin"? Nature is in no way to blame for this cleavage;

the inner man does not belong to nature, and the man in the flesh transgresses only in so far as he is the inner man at the same time. Genesis makes the serpent the incarnate principle of evil, because man as long as he is not led astray cannot incur guilt. The step from paradisaical innocence to guilt and sin is the step from nature to man, from the original unity of world and God to the disunion of man and God. This step includes a mystery that cannot be interpreted in terms of an action of God alone or of man alone. Therefore, a third cosmic power, Satan, seduces man through the mouth of the miraculous serpent. Man in paradise is represented as one creature among other creatures who are alike ignorant of the difference between God and nature, between good and evil. How can man push beyond the bounds of nature? How can he become aware of himself as distinguished not only in degree but in essence from all other things and beings? How can he become aware of God as distinguished from the world? Scripture answers: by the fall. But how can man fall away from the original unity with nature and God? Scripture answers: by temptation. But how can man be tempted? Scripture answers: by the voice of Satan. This wonderful story disguises the deep riddle of evil in a myth. Is it possible to transform the biblical legend into a rational conception? Is it possible to comprehend the nature of evil by means of thought?

The Greeks were not able to comprehend the depth of this mystery, because they still lived "in the paradise of the human mind." They had not yet ruptured the unity of the world and God, of man and the world, and of man and God, although, of course, they observed the phenomenon of evil. But they did not yet know its true depth and its full weight. Their mind was still at peace with nature and reason. There is no mystery at all in the entire

system of Aristotle, not even a possible place for it. Plato was the only classical Greek thinker who had a glimpse of things beyond the terminus of reason; and this, one supposes, was the reason why the early Christian thinkers rested on Platonism when they first began the work of reconciliation of philosophy and revelation. But the mystery of evil was not detected by Plato either. The Christian thinkers first envisaged its depth with philosophic and religious eyes.

Clement of Alexandria and Origen emphasized freedom of the will; they knew very well that this emphasis was new and was specifically Christian. They first broke through the wall of Greek intellectualism and recognized the primacy of the will; this was achieved by them because they rested upon the Biblical idea of man, or to put it in other words, because they acknowledged the primacy of faith. "Volition takes the precedence of all; for the intellectual powers are the ministers of the Will."<sup>7</sup> Clement realized the difference between the metaphysical concept of man in Greek philosophy and the religious image of man in Christian faith. He rejects, therefore, the term "nature" as inadequate to comprehend the peculiar position of man in the Universe and his relation to God. "God has no natural relation to us, as the authors of the heresies will have it. . . ." We "are in no respect related to Him, I say, either in our essence or nature, or in the particular energy of our essence, but only in our being the work of His will."<sup>8</sup> Man not as a rational animal, but as a willing being faces God. Will and belief make man the peculiar being he is, not his intellect nor any other attribute that could be added to the genus animal. Through his will man is man; his moral freedom signifies his metaphysical dig-

<sup>7</sup> *Stromata* II, ch. 17.

<sup>8</sup> *I.c.* ch. 16.



nity. Clement speaks of faith as "the direct result of free choice," as a "voluntary faith."<sup>9</sup>

The Greeks had not yet discovered the significance of man as a moral person. They held that it is primarily the *act* that is good or evil, not the *person*. They did not yet comprehend the value of the individual. Aristotle conceives of man as an individual in the same way he conceives of all particular things. They are particular or just these things on account of the matter that is formed and animated by the substantial species. Socrates is distinguished from any other Greek because of the matter he represents. What is individual in Socrates is thus infinitely less worthy than what is generic; in the metaphysical order the general and the universal alone has a rank, the individual as such has no metaphysical dignity at all. The Christian thinker comprehends man as person; the person is the appearance of the will, and the will is exempt from natural causality. In the Greek conception man is a *substance*, in the Christian conception he is a *subject*, a *self*.

The Greeks did not yet envisage the moral freedom of man, which is the precondition of his metaphysical infinity, his unique position in the Universe, his being "created in the image of God." Man, therefore, in their conception is evil if his acts do not agree with the form Man, with his rational nature; not if the individual will, as such, is corrupted or depraved. The *person* is not bad, the *actions* are bad. According to the Christian conception, on the other hand, the person is good or evil, good when united with God, evil when separated from God and, therefore, divided against himself. Man, says Aristotle, becomes just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions. "As the trees must exist," says Luther in contrast with this

<sup>9</sup> I.c. ch. 3.

Greek (and Catholic) view, "before the fruit, and the fruit does not make the trees good or evil, but the trees make the fruit, so man must be good or evil in his person, before he does good or evil actions."<sup>10</sup>

Is there a third possible way of interpreting the nature of evil besides the Greek and the Christian viewpoints? Kant tried to elucidate such a third possibility. On the one hand, he endeavored to retain the standpoint of reason; on the other, he accepted the historic view of Christianity. The result is his doctrine of rational faith, as I have represented it in the foregoing lecture. He believed his idea of rational faith to be in perfect agreement with the Christian faith. He was not mistaken in so far as his theory is better adapted to the Christian faith than any theory based on the Greek version of human nature. It is strange to think that the philosophy of a man who shared in the general enlightenment and rationalism of his age was more Christian in substance than the system of the Dominican Thomas. The reason is that Kant abandoned completely the Greek standpoint of philosophical wisdom, of the harmony between virtue and happiness, and of the unity of nature, man, and God. He adopted from Christian teaching the idea that man's virtue consists in the obedience to a law which is in no way comparable and compatible with the "forms" or principles ruling the objective world. Kant realized that the Christian faith entails the overcoming of the cosmic outlook of the Greeks. He followed the Christian doctrine that man is possessed of a free will, and that he must determine himself instead of being determined by his nature. He agreed with the Christian conception of man so far; but this agreement has its limit. Kant transforms the commandment of God into a law given by reason itself, called by

<sup>10</sup> *On the Freedom of a Christian* (1520). Compare Matthew VII, 16ff.

him "the moral law." Whereas the Bible envisages man as the creature of God, Kant looks at him as a being to be governed and controlled by himself alone (in so far as he is a moral being).

Thus it was required that he erect a bridge between virtue and happiness, since the connection was no longer guaranteed by the nature of virtue as it was in the Greek conception of wisdom and, on the other hand, was not granted by God on the ground of an obedience to God's commandment. The consequence of this demand was the doctrine of rational faith. Kant thinks it possible that reason postulates a faith which is identical in substance with the Christian faith. In this indirect way the harmony between virtue and happiness is restored by Kant. It is no longer reason alone as in Greek wisdom, but it also is not faith alone which warrants man's welfare. It is a faith based on reason and alleged to be the same faith as that based on revelation or the word of God.

Evil must now be envisaged in a new manner also. It is the result neither of a failure of knowledge, nor of a transgression of the commandments of God. It means rather a disobedience on the part of free will of its own law. Evil in the Greek system is a peculiar example of the general fact that the phenomenal world is composed of matter and form, and that matter disturbs and modifies the true effect of the form. There is no real freedom of the will in the philosophy of Aristotle. The freedom granted to man by Aristotle does not include self-determination according to a law of freedom. It concerns only the way in which man achieves the kind of virtue proper to his nature or essence. Man is not necessitated to act, as the brute animal is; he is free because he is a rational animal that acts in accordance with insight and knowledge. But insight and knowledge determine his will, the will

does not determine itself. Self-determination, in the doctrine of Aristotle, is determination of the will by man's real self, and his real self is his reason. If his insight is wrong, man's will is directed in the wrong way and he acts consequently in the wrong way too. In the philosophy of Kant, on the contrary, self-determination of the will purports determination of the will by the will. The will is man's real self, and the will is free in deciding how to act.

To be sure, reason also plays a part in Kant's doctrine of freedom, an important part. The will is free in so far as it is the will of reason or a rational will; the will is not free in so far as it is subject to desire and impulse. But the will is never completely subject to natural causes as is the beast. Man is a willing being just because he is not, like the beast, simply driven by his nature, but is able to determine himself. And in this respect Kant agrees with Aristotle. But there is a deep gulf between them, nevertheless, even with respect to the relation of will and reason. In the philosophy of Aristotle man is free, because his will is rational; in the philosophy of Kant man is free, because his will can obey or disobey the moral law. Or, in other words: man is free according to Aristotle because he is a rational being; man is free according to Kant because he is a willing being. Whereas Aristotle teaches that the moral value of a person depends on his insight, Kant teaches that this value depends on the decision of his will. The standard of man's moral value is intellectual with the ancient, it is volitional with the modern thinker.

Freedom of the will in Kant is, therefore, not only a psychological peculiarity of man; it does not characterize man as a natural species; rather it is a metaphysical and at the same time a moral privilege, the patent of man's nobility. Man cannot be regarded as a merely natural

creature, not even as a rational animal; he is an animal, but he is something more, and he is called upon to determine himself because he is more than a rational animal. In Aristotle, on the other hand, freedom is a psychological peculiarity only. Man is free, in so far as he can choose between different possibilities of acting; but it is his intellect that chooses and that leads the will, and therefore primarily his intellect and only secondarily his will makes him good or evil. Man is the highest animal, but he is an animal and nothing else. To be an animal is his "form," his nature, the attribute "rational" does not change this fact; it determines the kind of animal man is, but it does not elevate man above the level of animal, above the level of nature altogether.

Kant draws the conclusion of the Christian conception of man as a being exiled from paradise, who has broken the original bond between himself and nature. Nature is the objective world, thought of as a whole. Man stands outside this whole, because he stands under a unique law which addresses his free will, and which makes his will free by addressing him. Man is not, or not only, a worldly being, a being living in space and time. He is primarily, and in so far as he is man, a being that has or ought to have his stand outside the world of causality, namely on the ground of the freedom of the will. But whereas the Christian faith puts man face to face with the invisible God, the Creator of the world and of man, Kant puts him face to face with himself, with the invisible and sublime law in himself, the law of freedom, the law of his own reason. If man stumbles and infringes the law, he transgresses primarily not against God, but against himself, against his real self as constituted by his freedom, i.e., by the moral law and the pure practical reason. Only subsequently is the law conceived of as a command-

ment of God, and the transgression as committed against Him. World, God, man—these are the centers of the Greek, the Christian, and the modern outlook. Kant is the keenest and purest representative of the modern view. Evil as error, evil as sin, and evil as a disobedience to the moral law of pure practical reason—these are the conceptions of evil corresponding to the three eras of European history. How shall we make our choice among them?

## CHAPTER V

### *The Mystery of Man*

GREEK, MEDIEVAL, and modern conceptions of man agree in that they describe man as a rational being. To be sure, there are deep and important differences in the definitions of the three ages, but there is also a remarkable concord among them. Man is a rational being; to be rational is the one distinguishing character of man. The beasts may be endowed with a certain kind of intelligence and ability to comprehend the things surrounding them, but they are irrational in that they cannot really know. Knowledge is based upon the consciousness of the universal nature of particular things. The *universal* is not only a certain idea in the mind of man derived from experiences of particular impressions and originating from their similarities and affinities; it is not only an indefinite image that copies and resembles the real things or the impressions of things; it represents rather the essence of things; it concerns their true nature: it is not only a psychological but also an ontological, not only a subjective but also an objective entity, not only an idea of the mind but also a factor, indeed the determining factor, in the thing itself.

We know things because we know this factor. We can know things because we possess the consciousness of the universals or a conceptual consciousness that can penetrate into the objective things and can discover their essence—be this essence determined in the way of Greek and medieval philosophy as the Idea, the substantial form

of the particular things, or in the way of modern science as the functional law of natural processes. We know the objects in such a way not because they generate impressions in our mind, but because our mind can think. The energy of thinking is the energy of reason. Reason is not impressed by things, it is rather an active and productive power by which man can attain to truth, that is, to a genuine knowledge of the objects. This knowledge is objective in so far as it is true; it is true in so far as it is objective. Man as a rational being, is a thinking being; his intellect has the transcendental power of transcending the sphere of mere subjective impressions and ideas by means of universals or concepts.

But this power of reason, mysterious as it is, is not the deepest mystery of man. Indeed, it would not seem to be mysterious at all, if man were not able to transcend the province of reason altogether and to penetrate into a sphere which is no longer subject to reason.

How can man transcend reason, and what kind of sphere is it which lies beyond the limit of reason and beyond the limit of the objective world? How can man know this limit, if it is the limit of knowledge altogether? This question opens the abyss of the mystery that we call man. Man is not only a rational being, an animal endowed with reason; he is a super-rational being at the same time, he confronts a super-rational realm, and he is man just because he is able to confront this realm.

Reason, as the power of the thinking mind, attains to objective knowledge by means of concepts or universals which correspond with the essence of things. Universals represent a kind of unity. The substantial form as well as the functional law unifies a certain manifold of sense data; they express the objective unity which holds the data together and gives them an objective reality. But reason



is not satisfied to know sense objects, that is, relative units; it cannot rest until it knows the unity of all units, the ultimate or absolute unity of all things—not only of these *objects*, but also of the knowing *subjects*. Reason can function at its best as long as it is supported by sense perception; the activity of reason needs a material that it can order by means of conceptual thought: a manifold that can be unified by universals. It can work only if experience furnishes the intellect with a content. The ultimate unity cannot be experienced; it cannot be known. Nevertheless it is an indispensable, unavoidable demand of reason to conceive this unity. Reason meets its limit precisely if it tries to overcome all limits and to reach its ultimate horizon.

As it is impossible to reach the ultimate horizon of the sensible world, it is also impossible to comprehend the absolute whole of all things whatsoever. Although it is reason itself that aspires to extend itself to its utmost range, and although the concept of the ultimate unity, therefore, is a rational concept, reason encounters in this concept an insurmountable barrier: the ultimate mystery. A mystery is a problem that reason cannot yet solve; the ultimate mystery is a problem that reason can never solve. Man is man not because he is a rational being but because he can proceed to the utmost limit of reason and there face the ultimate mystery. So man himself is a mystery. Facing the ultimate mystery, man is not longer to be determined by reason.

To be sure, reason is the sign and symbol of man's dignity; of his being superior to the whole objective world; of his being superior to his own animal nature. But it is not the sign and symbol of his highest value; it is not the ultimate summit of his nature. On the contrary, man reaches this summit only when he conceives of himself as

a mystery, as a being that cannot be conceived by reason, that cannot be conceived by any conceptual means whatsoever. Man is man just because his nature transcends itself, or because he has no fixed nature at all, but rather is a mystery transcending his rational power in facing the ultimate mystery—the mystery of the Ultimate.

The Ultimate cannot be grasped by a universal, it cannot be comprehended by a concept. The term "Ultimate" of course is a concept, but it does not really conceive the object at which it points: it indicates only the direction in which the object should be sought. But at the same time it indicates that the object is not found and cannot be found by conceptual means. It is in this sense that the Ultimate is conceived of as a mystery, as the ultimate mystery. In this mystery the chasm between the universal and the particular, between the ideal sphere of concepts and the real sphere of things is assumed to be filled. But precisely for this reason, no universal whatsoever, no concept can perform this ultimate task. The Ultimate challenges reason to strain itself to its utmost frontier at which it collapses.

Thus, reason is not the summit of man. Man, the total man, transcends reason: his consciousness participates in the ultimate mystery. Man is not only like everything else, embraced by the mystery of the Ultimate, he is also conscious of being embraced by it; he is "mystery-conscious," as he is conscious of his own self. He is mystery-conscious, just because he is endowed with reason, but also with the faculty of transcending reason. Only a rational being that is super-rational at the same time can become aware of the ultimate mystery, of the Ultimate as a mystery. Reason is the indispensable precondition of man's ultimate consciousness.

The definition of old, that man is a rational being is,

therefore, utterly insufficient. Precisely what characterizes man as man is both: that he is a rational being and that he confronts what is beyond all reason; or that he knows himself not to be a rational being only. The philosopher may be prone to forget this fundamental truth; indeed, he may really forget it in the course of his thought, because this truth threatens all his endeavor and endangers his system. The non-philosophizing man knows it better; he is more philosophical just because he philosophizes less.

The Ultimate is neither a universal, nor can it be grasped by a universal. From this it follows, that the universal is not ultimate. No concept can ever be absolute. Conceptual (logical) knowledge always hints at something beyond its limit. The very nature of the concept prohibits the possibility of its serving as an instrument of ultimate knowledge. Ultimate knowledge, if there is such a thing, must transcend the horizon of scientific and philosophic, of empirical and metaphysical, of all knowledge based on logical procedure. Therefore no knowledge of this kind can be ultimate: on the contrary, it will always and, by its very nature, be penultimate and incomplete. The realm of universals can never contain the full and absolute truth as Plato assumed.

Everything we know and can know is embraced by the ultimate mystery and can, therefore, not be known completely and unconditionally. There is an ultimate barrier to all knowledge in all realms of science and thought. This insight deprives every knowledge of its ultimacy. It humiliates man, but it also elevates man above the level of merely finite and relative knowledge. It marks the summit and the limit of man's intellectual capacity. It marks the boundary between logical thought and religious faith, between reason and revelation, between man and God.

Faith calls the Ultimate God: this holy name, however, does not enlarge our intellectual capacity; it is not the name of a concept. On the contrary, it enlarges the horizon of man's total consciousness precisely because it establishes a knowledge beyond all conceptual knowledge. The knowledge of God, as religion possesses it, confirms and illuminates man's consciousness of the Ultimate as the ultimate mystery that permeates everything, embraces everything, completes everything.

Man is man, because he is both a rational being and a mystery. It is the glory of Socrates that he emphasized both man's dignity and man's limit, the greatness of reason and the abyss of ignorance. While he was surrounded by a multitude of scientists and thinkers who pretended to know the essence of the Universe, he insisted upon man's complete and final lack of ultimate knowledge, he stressed the fact that we face an ultimate mystery and that the dignity and the limit of man are bound together with iron chains, for it is man's highest dignity to know that he knows nothing—nothing whatsoever in ultimate respect.

The consciousness of the ultimacy of our ignorance is the source of religious awe. There cannot be such an awe, if we lose this consciousness; there cannot be genuine faith, if we deny the limit of reason and the realm beyond this limit. Faith is what it is, only if we recognize and acknowledge that it reaches beyond reason into the unknown and unknowable. Only then faith ceases to be a provisional attitude, a mere assumption, a substitute for a genuine knowledge and an anticipation of a rational solution not yet obtained. Only then do the real depth and the real superiority of faith appear in their full light. Only then is the primacy of faith, as compared with all rational knowledge, revealed. It cannot be denied that the

human mind and human life are related to ultimate mystery, in so far as we are always uncertain as to the total meaning and goal of our endeavors and labors. Although in our minds there are certain purposes and aims, we never know the end toward which we are striving, as individuals or as a race. Man's life is intrinsically incomplete and unsatisfying. Most thinkers of all ages have suggested that the highest goal of man is a state of perfect happiness or blessedness. But no thinker can tell us how such a state is constituted, nor what it would be like, because life ceases to be life if dissatisfaction and incompleteness no longer perturb and impede us.

Some ancient and medieval thinkers have suggested that the state of contemplation is best wherein the object of contemplation is absolute truth. Thus Aristotle depicts the life of God as an eternal contemplation of eternal truth, which at the same time is His own nature, so that He is contemplating Himself in contemplating truth. Is such a picture convincing? Does not the pleasure we enjoy in thinking or theorizing rest on the tension between our ignorance and the truth at which we aim? A state of full completion of knowledge cannot be assumed to grant the same pleasure or a higher degree of happiness even if the perfectly disclosed truth is a joy or a blessing in itself. On the contrary, it must lead to an intolerable weariness of mind, as far as we can anticipate it on the basis of our present experience. And the same must be true with respect to all other previsions of an eternal joy or delight. It seems as if the earthly alternation of joy and grief is the only possible standard of life if we do not apply the term "life" also to a completely unknown and unknowable state of existence.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficulties that show what men are, Epictetus

<sup>1</sup> Comp. F. Royce, *Studies of Good and Evil*, p. 22.

says.<sup>2</sup> Our human state is bewildering and thrilling. While all other animals are determined by nature, we are destined to determine ourselves. It is our privilege and the source of all our moral evils that we possess this freedom. This ambiguous gift originates with the consciousness of the ultimate mystery; for in facing it we discover that we ourselves are ultimate. We are not constrained to set definite particular ends to our will, we rather entertain universal views upon the meaning of our life while deciding particular issues. The consciousness of the ultimate mystery frees us from all finite ends, although we do not cease to live our finite life and to pursue finite aims. Thus we try to envisage a goal beyond all those ends, although we are unable to grasp this goal in a concrete manner. This unknown goal looms beyond all our purposes, intentions, plans, and concerns. Our ideals are made possible only by that consciousness of the infinite end, the ultimate meaning of life. Therefore, the good appears in the light of its transcendency and majesty superior to anything we can accomplish. Our life would be poor and even more miserable than it is, did not the idea of the good, uncertain though it be and devoid of concrete content, elevate our mind and endow it with the splendor of its own infinity and ultimacy.

On the other hand, the same consciousness takes away, as it were, the solid ground and stable earth in which all finite things and beings are rooted. It lifts man above the level of nature without granting him any other footing. It confronts him with the abyss of his ignorance in both theoretical and ethical respects. It is a huge vacuum, a darkness in which the light of the infinite good shines, illuminating it without dispelling it. "The light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

<sup>2</sup> Diatr. I, ch. XXIV.

Therefore, the face of the infinite mystery overwhelms man as much as it frees and ennobles him. It threatens and frightens him as much as it diminishes the threatening and frightening power of finite and definite dangers or adversities. It causes man's greatness and his insignificance as well. Neither the life of any individual nor the life of any group contains its ultimate meaning. Therefore, all aims and ends within the scope of our human life are relative.

Infinity comprehended as only the endlessness of time does not comfort or elevate us. On the contrary, it emphasizes the fact that our life is fugitive and without significance in itself, if something does not exist, whatsoever its character, that transcends the bounds of the restless stream of time. The instability of our life and of all things accomplished in it conveys the sense of a tragic fate. If there is no meaning beyond the existence of our own labor and work then this tragedy is final and inescapable. We could never feel such doom, we could never become conscious of the relativity of our life and meaning, if we were not aware of the absolute mystery, the mystery of the Absolute. But the same awareness opens the door to a view beyond its bounds. The reality experienced in our life is not final, for there is something that we can never experience. Our horizon is not the horizon of the universe or of ultimate reality. Our life does not rest on itself. There is something "beyond tragedy."

This something is omnipresent and nowhere, inescapable and never attainable, all in all and nothing definite. It cannot be experienced but it can be found in all experiences. It is universal and, therefore, it can be grasped by reason. At the same time it restricts the realm of reason. It makes even reason itself mysterious! Indeed, it is a mystery that reason exists in a world which is thoroughly

mysterious. What can reason mean in such a world? How far does it reach, if the ultimate meaning of reality does not rest on it, if the world ultimately is superrational? No longer can reason pretend to be the source of meaning exclusively. There is a meaning which certainly does not rest on reason, and this meaning is not one among all the others. It is not a special or particular meaning. It is the all-embracing meaning; the meaning of all meanings, comprising all things and beings, all structures and all strata of reality, all experiences and all ideas, all purposes and all works, all institutions and all endeavors of the human race, science, art, philosophy and even religion! And this cardinal meaning does not rest on reason, cannot be comprehended by reason, but rather comprehends reason itself!

This is the stumbling block and the scandal which makes the offending of reason by the theological paradox meaningful, which makes the existence of all the mystical and mythical elements in religion intelligible and thus even reasonable! On the other hand, reason is itself universal by virtue of its very character and nature; otherwise we could not have said that the mystical becomes reasonable. Reason penetrates everything; its limitation must needs be intelligible and thus reasonable itself. But this means that reason must limit itself, that it must draw the demarcation line between itself and the realm beyond. How is that possible? Kant has shown the way: reason must advance until it touches unavoidable and insoluble contradictions, or until it becomes dialectical. The all-embracing mystery penetrating reason appears within reason as *antinomy*.

Reason is ultimately self-contradictory, not because the Ultimate denies reason: on the contrary it confirms reason, for otherwise it would be impossible to experience it



as mystery. Reason does not contradict itself, as long as it dwells on finite things and concepts; it seems to be adapted to the objective world and to the moral life, if we do not transcend their bounds. It fails, if we do not respect this restriction; if we try to grasp the Ultimate with finite concepts—and all concepts are finite, *qua* concepts, that is, as defined ideas—reason demonstrates its own restrictions by contradictions. These contradictions, therefore, are reasonable and necessary. They confirm and illuminate the limit of reason. They are inescapable and insoluble. They do not imply refutations of either the thesis or the antithesis, rather they indicate that both thesis and antithesis are one-sided and unable to express ultimate truth. But the two opposite statements are not simply erroneous; on the contrary, they are the only rational possibilities of expressing ultimate truth—a truth which cannot properly be expressed by rational means. The antinomies, therefore, offer genuine though only negative knowledge of the Ultimate; *they demonstrate the truth that the Ultimate denies the duality of the opposite concepts and propositions*—that it ultimately unites them; but they also demonstrate that this ultimate unity is super-rational.

Reason is ultimately self-contradictory. This is the solution of the problem of how reason can become mysterious for reason. There is no other way out. And this solution alone can make religion intelligible. The words of Tertullian are bearers of truth: *credo quia absurdum*. Of course, we do not believe *because* the content of religious belief is self-contradictory; but this content must be **self-contradictory, in the eyes of reason**, because the ultimate is mysterious and transcends reason. Kant and Hegel tried to avoid this conclusion and to save reason, in spite of the contradictions, acknowledged by both thinkers.

Kant thought it possible to solve the antinomies of the transcendental dialectic with the aid of the vexed concept of the thing-in-itself. Thus he introduced mystery in a conceptual form into his system, without recognizing that the concept itself implied inescapable contradictions. The most obvious of these contradictions is the opposition between the alleged incomprehensibility of the thing-in-itself and its being comprehended by Kant's own system; another contradiction lies in the opposition between the idealistic version which suggests that the objects of knowledge are phenomenal only, or appearances in our consciousness, and the realistic version that those objects are the things-in-themselves. Both interpretations of Kant's theory are right and both are wrong.

It was this contradiction which generated all the disputes amongst the followers of Kant, and which motivated the development of post-Kantian thought from Fichte to Hegel.<sup>3</sup> Kant held that the antinomies of pure reason could be solved by relating each thesis to the world of the things-in-themselves, i.e., the world beyond space and time, and each antithesis to the phenomenal world. But he did not realize that the relation between the two worlds or spheres renews the antinomies; in other words, that the idea of ultimate reality, as conceived in the thing-in-itself, does not permit the opposition between itself and the phenomenal world, just because it is ultimate.

Hegel, on the other hand, transformed the all-embracing mystery into a system of necessary contradictions, derived from each other by means of a dialectical method, which are solved eventually as the final result of the development of the whole system. This system replaces the mystery. This conception is the most daring solution of the ultimate problem ever proposed, and nobody who

<sup>3</sup> Comp. the author's *Von Kant bis Hegel*, 1921-24.

has studied the system of Hegel thoroughly can deny that it is one of the greatest monuments of thought in the history of European philosophy. Still it cannot be maintained. It destroys and falsifies the mystery instead of preserving its character. It does not succeed in overcoming the contradictions. The opposition between philosophy and religion is not reconciled. Philosophy pretends to have translated the content of religion completely into the language of thought. The system, therefore, does not point beyond itself, it is self-sufficient and all-inclusive.<sup>4</sup> But this program cannot be carried out. Many rifts appear in the development of the "absolute idea" and the antinomy between this idea and reality is not removed. It cannot be resolved at all. Reason must abdicate ultimately, "to make room for faith."

But one thing is made clear by the supreme effort of Hegel: that the antinomies are not avoidable contradictions which simply indicate that reason has gone astray. The antinomies are "real," they are the adequate expression of the ultimate position which philosophy can and must assume, in order to draw the boundary line between its own field and that of the ultimate mystery. *The antinomies disclose in the only possible logical form that there is something which cannot be at all expressed by means of logical thought.* Herein lies the difference between an ordinary contradiction which implies nothing beyond the nullity of one of two conflicting propositions, and the metaphysical antinomy, which means that the distinctions of thought are no longer valid in the realm that stretches beyond thought. The metaphysical dialectic thus reveals something about the mystery without unveiling it: it

<sup>4</sup> There is an undercurrent of a "negative theology" in Hegel's system which is not compatible with the positive character as described above. Comp. my essay: "God, Nation, and Individual in the Philosophy of Hegel" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Dec., 1941.

points out that there is an ultimate synthesis of those distinctions, an ultimate unity which reconciles the opposite concepts, and that this unity cannot be conceived of by means of thought in a positive, but only in the negative way of antinomies.<sup>5</sup>

The mystery of man consists in the fact that he faces the all-embracing mystery. Everything else is embraced by it while man embraces it and is embraced by it at the same time. This bestows upon man a unique prerogative and a unique task. It elevates him above all other creatures and makes him the center of the objective world. It is this unique position which induced Kant to reverse the usual conception concerning the relation between the objective world and the subjective consciousness, or between the objects of knowledge and the knowing subject, and to bring about that "Copernican revolution" in the epistemological field which conceives the knowing subject as the lawgiver of the objective world, i.e., of nature. All thinkers before Kant took it for granted that the intellect is bound to copy things. Kant teaches that the intellect prescribes logical forms for the objects of nature: that the objective world can be made the object of knowledge only because the intellect constitutes the intelligible order of the objects. The objects can be investigated and known just because they "obey" the intellect from the outset or "*a priori*."

Thus Kant solves the problem of how the intellect can transcend the sphere of merely subjective impressions and ideas, and can penetrate into the essence or substance of the objects—a problem that Hume held to be insoluble. This famous theory of knowledge, though it represents a revolutionary turn in the history of philosophy, is not as

<sup>5</sup> Comp. my essay: "Die Einheit der Gegensätze—das Grundprinzip aller Metaphysik" in *De Idee*, 1936.

revolutionary as it seems to be. There is a traditional element in the theory, that is somewhat obscured in the presentation of Kant, because of the emphasis Kant laid upon the criticism of natural theology. But it is not difficult to detect this element and to show its connection with older views, especially with the scholastic conceptions regarding the nature of knowledge.

The human intellect, Kant insists, prescribes to nature its own laws. What is the true kernel of this daring and seemingly paradoxical doctrine? Is it really the *human* intellect that has this magical power over nature? Kant calls the human intellect, in connection with this power, "transcendental understanding." Man's understanding is transcendental, because it transcends its subjectivity and constitutes the logical order of nature. But in so far as man's understanding is transcendental, the term "man" is used not in the sense of the "rational animal," but rather in the sense of the universal self that underlies all acts of knowledge as well as all objects of knowledge. In other words: the term "transcendental understanding" takes exactly the place of the divine intellect in older theories. Kant teaches that man is able to know, because he participates in the divine intellect, or because his intellect is, though in a restricted way, nevertheless divine. This is the meaning of the term "transcendental" in the last analysis.

To be sure, the modern and revolutionary element in this theory should not be minimized. Kant stresses the restricted fashion in which the divine intellect is represented by man. Whereas the older theories naïvely spoke about the divine intellect as if it were possible to know it, Kant's issues from human knowledge, analyzes the human understanding, and discovers its transcendental power and proceeds to criticise all natural theology. This makes

it appear as if Kant's theory were absolutely new, and as if the term "transcendental" had no relation whatsoever with former insights and doctrines. This is not true. On the contrary, Kant renews, in opposition to most modern theories which had denied the divine origin and dignity of man's intellect and had analyzed it in an empirical fashion, the old theological interpretation of knowledge, of the universals and of the categories. He renews it in a modern way by transforming the theological to a humanistic aspect. But the deeper we look into the theory the more shall we rediscover the old background out of which it has risen.

The revolutionary element consists in the insight that the intellect (and reason altogether) is restricted—and so far human—because the entire opposition of object and subject, of the things to be known and the knowing self, of nature and man, of the world of sense and the intellectual forms cannot be ultimate. Or to put it otherwise: Kant has seen that the Ultimate means ultimate unity of those opposites which are the very foundation of human knowledge and life. The idea of God is the idea of this ultimate unity; it is this idea in the form of an ultimate self, for the self is the source of unity altogether. The human intellect is transcendental, it prescribes to nature its laws, just because it imposes upon the manifold of sense data its own unity in various ways, called intellectual forms or categories. *The transcendental power of the intellect thus rests ultimately on the ultimate unity.*

Knowledge of nature is possible, because ultimately nature is a unity to be restored by man's intellect and because this intellect, as the capacity of unifying the sense data, participates in the ultimate unity, or is this unity, though only in a restricted, that is, in an abstract fashion.

Knowledge is a process; it is the process of filling the abstract unity of the human intellect and its forms, or of applying these forms to the sense material. Knowledge thus unifies this material in itself by subjecting it to the intellect. Knowledge approaches in this way ultimate unity; it approaches the divine intellect in which the cleavage between sensation and intellect, and consequently the source of error, is overcome, and knowledge is consummated.

Although science does not penetrate to the center of the divine mystery, it does nevertheless grasp something of it. Otherwise the truth of science would not be real truth at all. Science would be only a way of dealing with nature for practical purposes, as the pragmatic conception of truth would have it. If the truth discovered by science really has objective validity, if it is really truth and not merely a useful operational technique, then it reveals something of the universal mystery. Indeed, man can investigate nature in a scientific sense only because he participates in the ultimate intellect or in ultimate truth. He is investigating this truth in a restricted field with restricted means when he investigates nature. It is his peculiar mystery, his being able to face the mystery of the universe, that allows him to build up his system of science. If he did not face this mystery, he would not enjoy the relation to universal truth and would therefore have no relation to the truth whatever. He would be what the pragmatists think he is: a clever animal that seeks his advantages as the beasts seek their prey. Man can become a scientist only by virtue of his faculty of seeking the truth without practical interests and aims. And he can seek it in such a way only because he is able to strive after the infinite or unbounded truth. And he can strive after this truth only because he participates in the infinite mystery

of the whole, however restricted this participation may be. Man is man because he enjoys this participation, or because of his awareness of the ultimate.

This participation alone makes Kant's epistemological revolution intelligible and at the same time corrects his conclusions. If man is able to attain objective knowledge because man's understanding prescribes the logical forms to nature, then these forms are no longer confined to man's intellect, rather they are rooted in the ground of the universal truth and the universal mystery. It is not man's intellect which commands nature and prescribes its forms, but the universal intellect, i.e., the human intellect freed from every restriction (and therefore no longer the human one) which exercises this authority. Kant's epistemological theory thus undergoes a certain transformation and reapproaches the old conceptions of knowledge and truth. The forms of nature are forms in the divine reason, and we are able to attain objective knowledge because we participate in this reason to a certain degree. This participation is man's mystery. Hegel came to the same conclusion but he vitiated it by deifying the system of forms and by supposing that the restricted human intellect is able to free itself from all restrictions and to transform itself into the divine intellect. In other words, he transgressed the boundary line between philosophy and religion and thought it possible to rationalize the divine mystery by making reason mysterious.

What Kant calls "the transcendental apperception," i.e., the human consciousness, in so far as it contains the logical or, better, the metaphysical forms of nature, is man's intellect considered from the point of view of man's mystery. This mystery remains a mystery, although man is able to attain objective knowledge of nature, and although philosophic reflection can inquire into the system



of the metaphysical forms of nature and of the understanding. It remains a mystery because we cannot overcome the restriction peculiar to the human intellect and reach ultimate truth or the divine reason. On the contrary, the concept of such a reason is problematic, for we encounter the dialectical antinomies as soon as we begin to think it out. The mystery of man, though closely connected with that of the divine reason, is disclosed to a certain degree by Kant's epistemological theory, notwithstanding the necessary correction which we have discussed. Man's intellect is the center of the objective world in so far as man is able to find out the objective truth, or in so far as he is not an object himself but rather the perceiving and judging subject of knowledge, the thinking self. Man is a self in so far as he faces the ultimate mystery. He is a self on the ground of his being related to ultimate truth. It is this relation which elevates man above all things and beings which are not selves. Being a self, man can put himself opposite the objective world, he can make himself the center of his volition and action, he can determine himself, he is a moral being.

Man as a self is a mystery because he is never completed but always striving to become a self in the fullest sense. He is a restricted self for he is divided against himself. He is a self and he is not yet a self but endeavors to overcome all divisions and limitations in order to realize his self. Man is what he ought to be and what he always is becoming without ever being. He is always on the way toward himself and that means at the same time toward the ultimate mystery, the ultimate truth, and the ultimate good. Man is a self divided against himself; he belongs at the same time to the objective world like every other animal, and he lives in his own world, in the world constituted by his being a self, in the world of his human

volitions and emotions, struggles and achievements, thoughts and plans.

Man as a self is divided into sensation and intellect, into desire and obligation, into objective knowledge and intuitive imagination, or into that sphere which he can perceive and experience with his senses and his understanding, in which he can pursue his interests and perform his duties and that sphere which is beyond all these bounds, which he can neither perceive nor experience with his senses and his understanding, and which transcends all his interests and even all his duties. Man can strive to overcome these divisions and to unify himself by unifying the different spheres of his being, but he can never completely reach this goal. There are ultimate oppositions which cannot be reconciled either in life or in thought. Indeed, all human struggles can be understood in the light of those oppositions, but this understanding does not reconcile them.<sup>6</sup>

The inner disunity of man is the source of his inner life. It is the source of his happiness as it is of his misery, the source of all social and historical developments and revolutions, of all progress and of all retrogression. But man also lives or can live beyond all these changes, as it were, in advance of himself. He can come to rest in the consciousness of the universal mystery that must be the origin of all divisions and of their unity as well. We call such a coming to rest piety, not in a religious but in a mystical sense. Thinkers like Plotinus and Hegel have tried to deduce from this unity all the content of our experience; in vain, for it is just the character of the mystery to make such a deduction impossible. The peace we can derive from the consciousness of that unity should

<sup>6</sup> Comp. my book: *Die Selbstverwirklichung des Geistes*, Tübingen, 1928.

not urge us to any venture of reason which destroys the very nature of the mystery and does not really satisfy our intellect.

The origin of man out of the original unity, the origin of the cleft between man and nature, self and world, is as much veiled as is the origin of all the dualities in man himself. Thought can ascend from the region of our human disharmony toward the idea of the highest unity, but it cannot finish this "*itinerarium mentis in deum*" because of the antinomies which finally bar the way. No more can thought descend from its highest point to the human world of strife and struggle.

We can trace these divisions in man to a primary duality in thought. Parmenides and Plato and Hegel are right in assuming that the opposition of being and not-being must be acknowledged as the most abstract and, therefore, as the original duality from the standpoint of metaphysics or ontology. This opposition is *a priori* to every other, for every other one is an opposition because one of the opposites is what the other is not. It also is true that being is *a priori* to not-being; the negation presupposes what it negates. But negation cannot be deduced from positive being. It is true that there is a problem arising out of the opposition between being and not-being, for although being is *a priori* to not-being, being cannot itself be conceived without an opposite, be it that of thought, or of becoming, or ultimately of not-being. Thus the highest or first opposition is already hidden in being itself. Being could never be being without being opposed to not-being. There is something which is *a priori* to the opposition of being and not-being, that is the unity of both. But thought cannot grasp and determine this something beyond the opposition. Hegel thinks that the development of all categories from "being," to the category

of thought itself or of the "absolute idea," can determine this unity beyond all oppositions; but at the end the highest synthesis turns out to be not really the highest synthesis but to produce a new opposition, that of thought and nature. There is no category, no concept, no entity or substance that could be thought of as being *the* unity without any opposition whatever.

Man never abandons the sphere of oppositions as long as he remains in the realm of thought. Ultimate unity looms beyond this realm. It is the mystery of man, that he envisages this unity without being able to grasp it by means of thought. But in spite of this lasting ignorance, which is our human part, we can know the direction in which we have to strive after the truth.

We know that the ultimate is a unity and not an opposition. Although we cannot think of this unity without being confronted with unsurmountable antinomies, although even the very category of unity itself cannot be thought of without the opposite category of diversity, we know that we must seek ultimate truth in the direction of unity. For we know that opposition is the source of our being prevented from reaching the ultimate goal of all knowledge and, indeed, of all human striving. We know that the positive and not the negative side of the opposition fixes the way beyond and leads to ultimate truth. We know that being and not not-being indicates the place of the "absolute idea" which we can never achieve without contradiction. We know that truth and not error, that good and not evil, is the goal of all our aspiration, although we cannot be rid of error and of evil; and although even the idea of good as having absorbed or overcome all evil cannot be grasped without contradiction. We know the direction in which the true and the

good needs be sought. But this knowledge is never entirely complete because it could be completed only by the complete knowledge of the goal, and this knowledge is beset with inescapable and insoluble antinomies.

## CHAPTER VI

### *The Origin of Evil in the Will*

MAN IS A MYSTERY because he faces the Ultimate, the Infinite, the Absolute—in all its wondrous manifold, with all its complications and oppositions, and especially with the most astounding and most perplexing opposition of being itself and not-being (or nothing). Man is a mystery, because he is a thinking mind and faces the mystery of himself. Man is a mystery precisely because he not only *is*, but also *knows* himself to be a mystery. Being and awareness are not to be separated in the case of man, for man is the peculiar being he is just *because he knows himself* or *because he is a self*.

As a self, man is under obligation to determine himself; he is not like all other things in the world determined by his "nature." In a way he has no nature at all, because he has a will. By nature, man is neither good nor bad; he is good or bad by his will. The will is the center of man's moral self. Through his will he makes himself the man he is. He determines his "nature," his individual character. Man is essentially an individual, and *as an individual he is his will*.

Man is a mystery because he is aware of the ultimate mystery and therefore participates in the ultimacy of being, not only as all other things and beings do, but spiritually. But it is his will that bears the burden of this participation. Man's will is not a mere part of his organic body like his physiological functions and instincts. The

will, like the intellect and imagination, is an avenue whereby man can stride toward his infinite goal. But this privilege makes man's will responsible to itself; it makes him the moral being he is. It endows him with the gift of freedom—the most fateful of all gifts, for man can abuse it and destroy it. Freedom of the will means that the will is not determined by anything else but determines itself. Indeed, this is the intrinsic essence of the will: to determine itself, and therefore to be free. Thus will as will is free. Determinism of the will would deprive the will of its very nature. A will that is the effect of other causes and circumstances is no longer a will: it is the tool of masters other than the person who wills, be they outer or inner forces or energies, be they impressions or impulses.

But true as this undoubtedly is, it is also a very problematic statement. No observation nor investigation can ever test it, can either confirm or deny it, for freedom does not belong to the empirical world of causes and effects, it does not belong to the world we can investigate by means of the natural sciences. Freedom is neither a psychological nor a biological property of man (as Bergson erroneously teaches). Just because man's will *qua* will determines itself, it cannot be a link in the causal chain of nature; will is supernatural. The supernatural does not need to be sought in metaphysics and religion, it is already present in man's own will and self. But just for this reason the will is a problematic entity or property. It is correctly spoken of neither an entity nor a property, it is no natural endowment of man, it is rather a spiritual requirement, a moral postulate. We ought to will; we are called upon to make decisions and to accept responsibility for our actions. The will is a moral organ, indeed it is the center and the very spring of man's morality, or immo-

rality. Man is not really free, he ought to act as a free will.

Man hovers between nature and the ultimate, between the finite world of causes and effects and the infinite goal of his striving, between his relative aims and the final end. It is this duality that generates all the struggles, the troubles, the miseries and the tragedies of man's life; but it is also the source of all its glory and splendor. The origin of moral evil is identical with the origin of faith. Man hovers between the extremes of his being a creature of nature and his being a creature of God. But this division within him is by no means a clear and clean distinction. On the contrary, his dual nature is both a complete fusion and a fateful confusion. He is never and in no respect solely finite, and he is never and in no respect solely infinite. He is always both finite and infinite, natural and divine, subject to causality and challenged to freedom. He is infinite even in his most animal impulses and instincts: he can control them, he can exceed them, he can suppress them, he can modify them, he can refine them, and so forth. And he is finite still in his most sublime and elevated feelings and aspirations; a certain "earthly residue remains":

When every element  
The mind's high forces  
Have seized, subdued, and blent,  
No Angel divorces  
Twin-natures single grown,  
That inly mate them:  
Eternal love, alone,  
Can separate them.<sup>1</sup>

It is this dual nature that begets the duplicity of good and evil in volition and action.

<sup>1</sup> Faust II, Act V, Scene VII.



Man, as a self and as opposed to nature, has a relationship to the truth about nature; he can discern the difference between true and false without being engaged in the practical consequences of the truth or untruth of his judgments; he can develop a purely theoretical interest which is the presupposition of any scientific research and discovery. The difference between good and evil is still more closely connected with man's transcendental self. Whereas the opposition of true and false concerns man's knowledge, that of good and evil concerns his self directly, his value or worthlessness as a person. Man is a self and a person, because he is not only a part of nature, but a self-dependent being; he is able and obliged to determine himself, he is responsible for his actions. This self-dependence is the strongest indication of man's unique position relative to all other creatures belonging to nature. All of them are subject to certain rules; they obey these rules without knowing them and without willing them. Man also is subject to the laws of nature, but as far as he is man, he is conscious of the opposition of good and evil and, in accordance with this consciousness, acts either morally or immorally. The opposition of these values is no natural one. They belong to the specific human world and to the specific human consciousness.

It is the peculiarity of man's condition that he lives in the objective world but does not live for the sake of this world or of any purpose originating in this world. Rather does man live face to face with the universal mystery, striving after the true and the good. These are inseparably connected. The good is the true in the field of practical willing and acting; and the true is the good in the field of theoretical and speculative thinking and knowing. The true and the good both are related to the mystery of man, for they indicate the direction in which man moves toward

the synthesis he cannot find or establish within his experience and in his mind. Man is divided by the oppositions of true and false, of good and evil, because he cannot overcome the distance between himself and ultimate truth or ultimate goodness; or because he cannot accomplish his own synthesis and his own self. Man lives a manifold and divided career; he lives in many different strata. He is divided against himself. This peculiar condition is the origin both of error and of evil.

Good and evil are value-predicates applied to man's conduct and ends. At first sight one may think that the moral opposition can be derived from our natural life or at least can be classified in the same kind of order as all the other natural oppositions. Nature seems to be based on contrasts, as was observed by the philosophers of nature in the earliest period of Greek thought. The sensory qualities, like warm and cold, light and dark, and so on; the spatial determinations like large and small, high and low, and so on; the numeric contrasts of odd or even, plus and minus; the polarities of magnetism and electricity; finally the polarity of sex; these all show the contrasts which are characteristic of nature. We can pursue this characteristic further in the range of feeling: pleasure and pain, joy and grief and, arising from those, the instincts to seek this and avoid that, the impulses of attraction and repulsion. Again we find contrasts between the so-called passions, the polarity which Descartes and Spinoza used for the rational construction of a natural system of all human passions. Closely connected with the contrast of feelings and affections are those—important for human life and ethical decisions and actions of the will—contrasts between the useful and the harmful, between the pleasant and the unpleasant, between fortune and misfortune. Does not the contrast between good and

evil belong to the same series? Is it not grounded in nature as are those others? Is then a special investigation into the origin of evil necessary? Is not evil explicable in the same way as pain, hatred, misfortune, and other unto-ward things?

It cannot be denied that natural contrasts profoundly penetrate human life, as they do all life. The recognition of this fact must, however, not blind us to the differences that exist between the natural and the moral kind of contrast. As far as the natural polarities are concerned, whether organic or inorganic, each has both its poles equally within nature, so that there can be no question of one opposite being ranked above the other. The sensory, spatial, physical, and biological contrasts do not ensue from any contrasts of value nor do they include such value-predicates. The psychological opposites are subject to a certain kind of valuation; but this valuation is not related to the value of the self and the person, it concerns only the weal or woe of an individual. To be sure, passions and affectations can become the object of moral valuation, but then the contrast of good and evil is presupposed in, and not derived from, them. Harm, pain, adversity do not affect the worth of him who suffers from them. Envy, hate, revengefulness, jealousy can have injurious effects on the life and weal of the persons involved, but it is not this effect which is the object of our moral blame, but the motive behind them. This motive betrays a bad character, and this character is the source of evil actions.

The character of a man is centered in his will. A man of bad character does not will in accordance with those ends which he considers good. He is, therefore, divided within himself. The contrast of good and evil concerns the direction of the will. The good will is directed, or

rather the person of good will directs himself toward the good, or toward what seems to him the good. The person of evil will refuses to direct himself toward the good. Good and evil are not properly contrasting directions of the will, for the good will alone has a direction, whereas the bad will has none. Evil is, therefore, negative in quite different sense from the negative element in nature, even from the negative elements among the feelings.

It is altogether arbitrary to call anything in nature negative. Light is just as much the negative of dark as dark of light. Negative feelings are indeed negative as far as they relate to the life or welfare of the individual, but as feelings they are, after all, definite qualities, each with a content and by no means merely the privation of their positive counterparts. Evil, on the other hand, is nothing but the negation of good, though it be an active negation, a negation practiced by the will and not by the judging or thinking understanding only. The good is a positive goal and it is a particular content of the good will in a particular case, it is a definite aim of the person who wills it. Evil, on the contrary, is not such a goal and not such a content of the will; it is in fact the active negation of direction as such; it is what a person wills when he does not follow the direction of the good. The will cannot be directed toward evil because evil indicates no direction at all. One cannot therefore co-ordinate good with evil and place them upon the same level, as one co-ordinates warm and cold, positive and negative electricity, odd and even, or joy and grief, love and hate, pleasure and pain, the useful and the harmful. The good is direction, aim, demand, norm, and standard of moral conduct; evil is the refusal of the will to follow the good: it is intrinsically negative.

There is the good and there is the good will; and there

is the evil will, but there is not such a thing as *the* evil. The good indicates the direction toward the unification of the individual self within itself and with every other self or with the community. Evil indicates no direction at all; it lacks any goal; it indicates nothing but the attitude of that will which resists acting in accordance with the good. The evil will acts without ultimate direction whatsoever, following individual impulses, passions, affectations, inclinations and interests. It is a disorderly will, a will without any order save that which is forced on the will by those merely individual motives.

*Man does not will the evil*, he wills something which is opposed to the good. He wills it *in spite* of the fact that it is opposed, but *not because* it is evil. On the other hand, man can will the good because it is the good, indeed the good man is the man who wills the good for good's sake, regardless of the consequences that may ensue for himself or for other people. The evil deed is that deed which has been done although the actor acknowledges that it is evil. No human being, not even the worst and most wicked, wants evil *because* it is evil. On the contrary, any human being has a special reason whenever he commits a crime or violates a norm or acts viciously. And he indulges his desires or passions *although* he knows that it is evil to do so. It is the mythical person of the Devil alone who does the evil for its own sake, or (for there is no evil goal as such) who destroys the good just because it is good.

The good is a goal never completely reached; the evil is *no goal at all*, it is a quality of the evil will only. There are evil purposes, evil intentions, evil motives and actions; but there is no evil which corresponds to the good as such. This cardinal moral contrast is rooted in the mystery of man. If man could not envisage the good as the ultimate goal of his actions and of all his purposes, he could not

offer resistance to it; he could not become evil. The idea of order in the field of the practical reason originates from man's unique position in the world; and the idea of disorder likewise. Only man can attach himself to the good, as he can reject or defy it; only man can follow the right way or abandon it. The very concept of a right way rests on the concept of an infinite goal that we can approach by the determination of our will, by the direction of our activity. Although we cannot define the content of this goal in universal terms, nevertheless it directs us in our concrete consciousness in every concrete situation of life.

The universal content is hidden from us, because it is the ultimate mystery which looms behind the idea of the good, as it looms behind the idea of the true. But without the idea of the good we could never speak of any good purpose or will or action, of any good motive or character or man. The good would turn out to be the useful or the expedient only, it would refer to certain ends derived from the objective world, our natural desires or needs, or from other necessities. The idea of the infinite good alone lifts us above the level of all other beings and bestows upon man his specific dignity and the idea of the infinite value of the human person as such. It is the universal mystery which makes possible these ideas, because man is able to strive after the infinite good only by visualizing that mystery.

Evil has its origin in the center of man's self, i.e., in his will. The phenomenon of evil, in the moral sense, rests on the consciousness of knowing the right way and not choosing it. Of course, the phenomenon of moral error cannot be disputed. All moral education aims at the improvement of moral judgment and knowledge. Clear conceptions and the ability to find out the best way in a

concrete moral situation are important factors in the formation of the will; intellect and reason are of great importance to moral conduct. But the inner disposition and direction of the will itself is the proper object of moral valuation. Conscience is the judge, not of the truth of my knowledge concerning the circumstances of a concrete situation, and not even of the truth or untruth of my moral judgment, but rather of my will and my motive. I condemn myself, not because I erred in comprehending the facts or future developments in the situation where I acted; not because I misconstrued my duty; but because I did not act in accordance with my view of my duty. And I act with a good conscience when I examine all the foundations of my moral decision as carefully as possible, and then act as my moral reason commands me to do. The agreement between my own moral insight and the concept of my duty on the one hand, and the actual volition, on the other hand, is the *basis* of a good conscience and the proof of the moral value of my action.

To be sure, there are certain moral defects which do not depend directly and obviously on the decision of the will. They seem to originate in a bad constitution or natural disposition which works without intention or deliberate decision. These deficiencies are the counterpart of those unconscious virtues which may distinguish an individual, like gifts of nature; the less the individual knows about them, the more beautifully they adorn him, and the better he, therefore, pleases others. That is the reason why we are less severe in condemning the moral defects of children or people who have not been well educated. This phenomenon corroborates the general principle. Weaknesses of character, all defects or vices do not become morally objectionable until our conscience becomes aware of them, until the will copes with them in combat

and is defeated in the struggle. Distinctions can certainly be made within the phenomenon of evil; and one could reserve the term "evil" for the grosser manifestations of that will which acts in contrast with the good in itself. But that would be a matter of terminology only. The decisive point is that wherever it is a question of moral badness the will acts against its own better judgment. Sometimes this better judgment may not be in the foreground of self-consciousness at the moment of willing, it may be dimmed by the desires which oppose it, or it may be put aside as a disturbing element in the sweep of passion and desire; or the will may defy the better judgment and deceive itself by doing so. In all these cases the phenomenon of evil is not altered in any way; it always consists in disagreement between knowledge and will, in the revolt of the will against the commandment of the good.

Evil arises in man because he is a self and can and should determine himself, i.e., his own will. But how can evil arise in the self, when the self is the basis of man's superiority over nature, when man's dignity depends on his being a self, when man is a self by virtue of his striving after the infinite good? How can man fall away from himself and become subject to those motives which characterize him not as a self but as a being that is determined by nature like the animal? This is the special mystery of evil which must be traced to the mystery of man.

Man strives after the good for its own sake. He does not strive for evil, because it is something negative that cannot become the goal of the will. He succumbs to evil, he surrenders to the temptation. The phenomenon is so well known that it may seem curious to discern a mystery in it. What could be less mysterious than the weakness of the will which allows itself to be misled by the temptation of pleasure, by the idea of advantages of one kind or an-



other, by passions or idleness, to neglect its duties and, in fact, to refuse to do what reason and conscience clearly enough prescribe? That is, indeed, what happens daily as every man well knows.

But our familiarity with this phenomenon does nothing to change the fact that the mind is confronted with an intricate problem when it tries to analyze carefully what happens therein. For if the will is will only because it determines and guides itself, how can it allow itself to be determined and misled? How can it succumb to evil without ceasing at the same time to be will, and falling back to the level of nature, where will and sin and guilt do not exist at all? As we have shown before, the phenomenon of evil exhibits no such retrogressive step. It is the will itself that becomes evil and yields to temptation thus surrendering itself. If the will were a natural force within the soul and able to contend with other forces, such as the passions, the desires; if it could conquer or be defeated in the struggle; the phenomenon of evil would be a natural occurrence, similar to physical or chemical processes. But the will is, by its very nature, not such a natural force. It is will in contrast to everything that is determined by necessity; its essence is self-determination. How can that which essentially determines itself cease to determine itself and instead allow itself to be overwhelmed and determined by motives arising in the soul with natural necessity?

If the process of evil volition were nothing but the failure of a force of the soul in a struggle with other forces, the human self would not be concerned with it at all, and would have no part therein. More than that, there would be no self. Why should man distinguish one force of his soul from all others, call it his *self*, conceive of it as being, and feel it to be, his real *I*? Why should he

blame himself when one force is defeated and others are victorious? Indeed, he could not make himself responsible, accuse himself, condemn himself. All those phenomena would be completely unintelligible, mere self-deceptions, or rather, not even that, for even self-deception presupposes the existence of a self!

The mysteriousness of evil arises from this very fact: that the will, contrary to its own nature and essence, can, like any mental element, get involved in a struggle with these factors and suffer defeat in this struggle. Or, putting it differently, it arises from the fact that, on the one hand, our self cannot become a mere part of the soul, that it cannot lose the characteristic quality of selfhood; and that, on the other hand, it can (though retaining that quality) yet sacrifice itself to parts or elements of the soul; or, that it can abandon and disown itself. This is the origin of a bad conscience, of internal conflict, of remorse and repentance. These phenomena cannot be ignored nor explained away; in fact they even serve to emphasize the mystery of evil.

The bad will, in succumbing to temptations, is by no means merely overwhelmed by impulses, desires, etc., but it turns against itself, *it negates and perverts itself by negating the good*. For the self and the good are inseparably connected; not in the sense taught by some philosophers that man is good by nature, but in the sense that man is a self by virtue of his spiritual awareness of the ultimate good. This awareness alone bestows on man his self-dependence and, therefore, his very self. The more man forsakes the path of the good, the more he sacrifices the direction and continuity of his will, the unity and harmony of his various desires and impulses, and steers toward indefinite shores. He loses his character and his self. The good grants man his self.

On the other hand, it is the self that is willing and acting also when man fails and transgresses. The bad will is *will* after all, and the will, as such, always determines itself. Willing is self-determination. The will, therefore, is always connected with understanding or reason, both coalesce in the personality of an individual. Reason envisages the right way and the will does or does not conform to it. A will without reason, a "blind will," is the device of the "blind" psychologist or metaphysician like Schopenhauer. But though connected with reason the will is not bound to follow reason, it is not rational in this sense. On the contrary, the will can turn against reason and insight, against itself, against the self whose will it is. How can one comprehend the bad will without falling victim to contradiction?

The bad will does not cease to be a will, even when it abandons reason, the good and the self. By means of thought and cognition it sets for itself its own aims, it seeks and grasps the means of their achievement. And in the course of this scheming and activity it can develop immense psychological and physical energy, pertinacity, patience and cool resolution, which become, as it were, virtues in the service of evil. In fact vice becomes more vicious the less it acts from a sudden impulse or passion, factors which are taken into account as extenuating circumstances in a verdict or the punishment of crime. The will remains more than ever responsible when, in abandonment of its real goal, namely the good, it allows itself to be led astray and, though misled, retains leadership; when determined, it determines itself; acting with a bad conscience and against moral reason, it yet is not merely driven passively but conceives and pursues its aims as an active agent—the will of course is always active—with intelligent judgment and deliberate choice. In this

falsification of its own nature it still remains a will which falls short of its own selfhood. Evil volition is, therefore, a self-contradiction. It is a process of getting involved in a conflict with oneself, a self-destruction of that unity which a man possesses as a self. The result is the disruption of the self into an accusing and an accused, a judging and a judged, a condemning and a condemned, a phenomenon which is known to everyone under the name "bad conscience."

The knowing and deliberate rejection of the good turns the will into an enemy. As one perverts his will in turning it away from the good, the good, too, turns away from him and perverts itself into the form of a law which punishes him. In this respect St. Paul is right when he says that sin and the moral law are inseparable.<sup>2</sup> The good, as such, is not law. It is a shortcoming of Kant's ethical doctrine to convert the good into the law of pure practical reason. The Greeks, and especially Plato, had superior insight when they proclaimed the good to be the highest goal and standard of human life. On the other hand, Kant is in accordance with the Christian outlook in so far as this, too, connects law and morality inseparably. In fact, Kant had benefited through the experience of Christianity. He is a Christian thinker in that he assumes as his ethical principle the moral law because the law alone makes possible that deeper conception and consciousness of sin in which the phenomenon of evil finds its ultimate expression. But Kant adopted the Christian position without adopting at the same time the Christian conception of the primacy of faith, and of the law as a commandment given man by God. In that respect, therefore, the Platonic idea of the good, which in fact repre-

<sup>2</sup> Romans, VII, 7 ff.

sents the idea of God in the system of Plato, is more adequate to Christian thought.

Kant secularized the religious image of God as the moral lawgiver and substituted for this image the concept of the autonomy of pure practical reason. Thus he has eliminated the idea of the good completely. This elimination is by no means possible or justified. We have to return to the Platonic doctrine which, indeed, is the doctrine of almost all ethical thinkers after Plato. On the other hand, we must respect the deeper conception of evil as interpreted by the biblical imagination. We can solve the problem which thus arises by taking refuge in the consciousness of the universal mystery which in fact cannot be neglected without damaging and weakening the whole fabric of philosophy.

The idea of the good as representing the direction in which man moves because he is aware of the mystery which confronts him and which makes him man and self cannot be dismissed. It is the cardinal principle of all ethical thought. The moral law presupposes the idea of a goal to be pursued by the will, a goal which does not depend on any natural urge or impulse or on any purpose derived from the objective world and belonging to it. This goal is the good, as such. This goal converts itself into a commandment or into a prohibition only because man can act in a direction contrary to it. The good enlarges the horizon of reason toward the infinite, toward a point beyond the limit of reason. Like truth, it makes reason transcendental.

The law is a law of reason only in so far as it has a rational form, but it is not given by reason. As the forms of objective knowledge originate in truth as the ultimate unity of spirit and nature, so the form of ethical knowl-

edge originates in the good. Of course, the good could not appear in the form of a law or a universal imperative without having been represented by reason to the frail will of man. But it is also true that the good itself could not even be the good in itself or the universal, the ultimate, the infinite good, if reason did not conceive it; and even the universal mystery is universal only because it is formed by reason. Without reason man is not able to grasp the universal mystery at all. But this truth does not mean that reason generates the universal mystery or the universal good. It generates neither the categories of the objective world nor the moral law. Man, it is true, denies reason if he transgresses against the moral law; but at the same time he acts in a manner hostile to the good. The moral law is not only *his* law, the law of his *reason*, it is the transformed *good itself*; in the language of religion: it is the *commandment of God*.

Indeed, the moral law, as conceived by Kant, is the mere form of a law. It has no content at all. Now, the content of the moral law is the good, as specified by the concrete situation. This content, as such, has not the form of an imperative until an opposing purpose or motive turns it into such a form. It is the content of every purpose of the good will; indeed, the will is good only because it has this purpose. And since the will as such wills the good, because this aim of the will makes it a will, no will but the good will can become a bad or evil will. The will is good, not by nature, but by itself; but the will is subject to perversion, the bad will is the will perverted by itself. Nothing can pervert the will but the will itself; for the will is, as will, self-determining and not determined by anything that has not become the purpose or the intention of the will.

The will, it is true, is not autonomous for it depends on

the insight of reason. The good will cannot will what it pleases but it is obliged to will in accordance with the good as acknowledged by reason. The freedom of the good will is not a matter of arbitrary choice. On the contrary, the path of the good is narrow, and the good will very often has no choice whatsoever. The freedom of the good will means that the will is not determined to act as its impulses and passions urge it to act. It is urged by itself to act in accordance with the good. This kind of urge is felt as the command of the moral law or of God. The urge of the good appears as a command only by virtue of the will's self-determination. An animal, not being a self, cannot acknowledge a command as the content of his own purpose and cannot determine himself by obeying the command. This is the prerogative of man alone; this is the mystery of man as compared with all other creatures of nature. This privilege makes man supernatural, or as the Bible says, created in the image of God.

There is, however, another kind of freedom expressed in evil action of the will. This action is arbitrary indeed. It is based on the faculty of self-determination, but it misuses this prerogative and perverts it so that freedom is changed into its opposite. Both kinds of freedom depend on each other. If there is no freedom in choosing the good, there can be no freedom in refusing it. It is the same freedom at the basis of both the good act and the evil act, but it is employed for contrary ends. The use which characterizes the good action makes man harmonious, because it agrees with the core of his selfhood and with the goal of his striving. In following this goal, man liberates himself from the controlling power of his natural desires and impulses; he becomes master of his will. He acts by means of his freedom on freedom's behalf. If he declines to choose the good, he makes himself the slave

of his animal nature. He uses the privileged state of his humanity to abandon this state. He could not abandon it without being free to do so. Herein lies the paradox of the evil will.

The evil will originates in the self-perversion of the good will. Man sacrifices his freedom by means of his freedom. Man could not fall away from his privileged state if he were not free to follow the good. But the reverse also is true: man could not be free to pursue the good without being able to refuse this loyalty. The idea of moral freedom, therefore, includes the idea of its possible misuse. The origin of moral evil in the will is rooted in the very nature of man's morality. Man would not be a self, could he not fail in realizing his selfhood. Selfhood involves the possibility of man's moral failure, since he can never act in full accordance with the good as long as he is what he is: a finite being striving after the good but never attaining it completely.

But this necessity by no means explains the origin of evil; the phenomenon of evil represents a contradiction not to be solved by insight into its origin. It is not only a theoretical contradiction that confronts the moral philosopher, it is at the same time a practical or a personal contradiction in which every human being is entangled when he acts sinfully. In doing evil one denies one's will by means of the will. Deliberately I betray my liberty. I deceive myself. I act as my own bitterest enemy. In a bad conscience I feel the reality of this contradiction as a trial in which I (as the author of my transgression) am accused by myself (as that self which strives after the good and which represents my real self). Thus moral evil splits the personality at its roots and provokes a struggle that can never be compounded. The self has no authority to pardon or to acquit the self that has com-



mitted the transgression. The self cannot reconcile itself. Accuser and defendant remain at odds, and the soul (that is, the whole self, which consists of the real and the appearing self) remains divided against itself. There is no solution of this contradiction, neither a practical nor a theoretical one.<sup>3</sup>

This unsolved and insoluble contradiction that implies the metaphysical opposition of being and not-being, of the finite and the infinite, of nature and spirit, of the objective world and the subjective self compels the thinking mind to appeal to faith as the highest tribunal. Not the moral will but divine love alone can disentangle this "nest of antinomies" as Kant calls it. Man reaches the utter limit of his own capacity, when he meets those opposites in himself. Not only as a thinking, but also as a willing, striving, and acting being, not only in intellect and understanding, but also in will and conscience, he is torn asunder, and neither his reason nor his will, neither thought nor action, can make him whole again, and complete what is incomplete.

Kant is right in saying that there is a practical solution only, and not a theoretical one, of the speculative ultimate problem. But this practical solution is not practical in the sense of practical or moral *reason*; it is practical only in so far as it is *not theoretical*—neither scientific nor philosophic, not a solution of theoretical, but also not a solution of practical reason, instead a solution brought about by *faith* alone. Faith can solve the ultimate prob-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Shakespeare, Richard III:

"What! do I fear myself? there's none else by:  
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.  
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes; I am.  
Then fly: what? from myself? Great reason why;  
Lest I revenge. What myself upon myself?"

And so on.

lem, and reconcile the will rent by itself, just because it transcends reason. Faith alone can reconcile the self with itself, just because faith transcends the entire sphere of the self and enters the sphere of ultimate unity. Not reason, but faith performs the highest work. This work can no longer be considered as the performance of disunited man, but rather as springing from the ultimate and original unity itself: as a gift of Him who is the giver of all spiritual gifts.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Idea of God and the Religious Imagination*

THOUGHT, MOVING toward the ultimate mystery of being, approaches the idea of God as the supreme self. This idea, though it is the necessary result of ontological and cosmological, of epistemological and ethical reflections, is nevertheless problematical and insufficient. If we measure it by standards of logical canons we must admit that it does not conform to requirements. It indicates a genuine problem, and it marks the direction of its solution, but it does not solve the problem. Thought ends in antinomies; it must appeal to a tribunal higher than itself; it points to a solution that cannot be given by any logical procedure and by any logical concept. This higher tribunal is that of faith; and the solution that transcends the whole sphere of conceptual thought is provided by religious imagination—the legitimate tool and vehicle of faith.

Faith and imagination are closely connected. Indeed, imagination is an indispensable, integral element of faith. No faith in the religious sense is possible without this element. It was the cardinal mistake of Kant to assume that faith can renounce imagination without losing its character; that reason can establish a rational faith. Kant was too much of a rationalist, in spite of his criticism of pure reason, to visualize the vital function of a non-rational factor within faith. He regarded this factor as a

source of superstition, therefore as an obstacle of pure, that is, of rational faith; or at best as a sensuous support of faith, necessary for those who are not morally strong enough to do without it; in any case as a merely subordinate factor that does not contribute anything essential and substantial to the true content of faith.<sup>1</sup> This true content is or should be solely rational, for truth cannot be reached save by reason. Imagination originates from the *senses*; the content of true faith is *supersensuous*, that is, *rational*.

Is this conclusion justified? I do not think it is. On the contrary, I think that imagination is an intrinsic and momentous element in faith. The content of faith is not only supersensuous, it is *superrational* too. And this super-rational ingredient in the content of faith is furnished by imagination. A purely rational faith is no real faith. The reality of faith is constituted by its imaginative content. Even a moral faith, if it is faith at all, and not merely morality, has an imaginative content. Indeed, the religion based on Scripture has a moral purport, nevertheless it is imaginative too, and it is a religion precisely because its moral purport is not merely rational, but superrational. Imagination alone can perform this work. Faith is not an attitude of reason, not even of practical reason. *It is faith just because the claim of reason is fulfilled, not by reason, but by imaginative revelation.*

Faith is neither, as Kant teaches, a postulate of pure practical reason nor is it a kind of intuition or emotion as Schleiermacher believes; it is rather a devotion to the content of a special and historically specialized imagina-

<sup>1</sup> In his work, *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason*, Kant acknowledges the function of imagination and even the legitimate existence of mysteries within religion, but this acknowledgment does not change the character of his central doctrine concerning religion, its exclusively ethical interpretation.

tion. This imagination is no accidental appendage of all historical religions, but an essential part of them. Hegel, who tried to substitute metaphysical for religious knowledge, was shrewd and ingenious enough to achieve this end by fusing logic with imagination. This undertaking, gigantic though it was, was doomed to fail; reason blending with imagination destroys itself and its partner as well. But this attempt shows that the highest task of the human mind, the task of establishing contact with the Supreme Being, cannot be discharged without the help of imagination.

Hegel asserts: the rational in itself is the mystical.<sup>2</sup> This is true in so far as reason ultimately is included in the mystery of the Whole, and in so far as reason therefore ultimately leads to antinomies. But the conversion of Hegel's thesis, namely that the mystical in itself is the rational, which also is maintained by Hegel, is not true. The mystical is wider than the rational, indeed it is all-comprehensive, all-embracing. And, therefore, reason is not even its most appropriate language. This language is imaginative rather. Even the very term *image*, as used in Scripture, has an imaginative connotation, just because it has a mystical connotation. Man is created in the image of God. What does this mean? What kind of similarity or kinship is stated by this word? Certainly no kind that could be interpreted as rationally lucid and exact. All central ideas in Scripture are imaginative: Creation, Paradise, the Fall and Punishment of Adam and Eve, the Covenant with God, the Land of Promise, and so on.

Imagination is at once a power and a mystery. How can it perform the miracle of presenting the content of faith? How can man approach the deity and how can God approach the human heart by way of an instrument that

<sup>2</sup> Complete Edition, Vol. VI, p. 160.

seems to be so much less appropriate for this purpose than reason? Is not imagination the source of arbitrary ideas? Does it not generate our dreams and is it not responsible for our wishful thinking? Is it not the archetype of the merely subjective products of the mind? Is it not akin to fancy and poetry? Consequently, is not imagination the least reliable attitude toward ultimate truth and ultimate reality? Is not faith, should imagination play an essential part in it, from the outset to be deprived of its alleged importance and truth? Is not then faith, as such, superstition? Is not Kant right, after all, that imagination can perhaps illustrate some true ideas, but never claim to be the legitimate and the only possible source of the content of faith?

These objections are suggestive and impressive. They have prevented, till the present time, all thinkers from recognizing the legitimacy of imagination in the realm of religion. But they do not stand the test of examination. Imagination is far more mysterious than it seems as long as we do not pay attention to its religious function. Scripture throughout uses figurative language particularly when it deals with ultimate truth; from the beginning to the end the personality of God is as much veiled by metaphors, symbolic expressions, and mysterious intimations as it is revealed. It is revealed, not in words of sober and literal speech, but in ever-changing images. Although the method of allegorical interpretation, applied by Christian thinkers, has often been misused, it had a true basis in the character of Scripture itself. Herder's insight was superior to that of Kant in this respect.<sup>3</sup> Faith is imaginative just because it is mystical. Faith, emptied of all mystical apprehension, loses its intimacy and therefore its very soul. The fear of superstition should not close

<sup>3</sup> Comp. Theodor Litt, Herder and Kant.

our eyes to the fact that imagination is the instrument of mystical insight and that without this insight faith cannot live.

Imagination furnishes the means through which faith solves the problems that reason alone is unable to solve. God is a God of faith, not of thought; He appears in the kingdom of imagination, not in the system of categories; He appears on Mount Sinai; in the burning bush, in the still small voice, not in the absolute idea. The knowledge of God is a knowledge immanent in faith; it cannot be isolated and made logical and conceptual; it is an imaginative knowledge inherent not in the methodical and argumentative course of philosophical reasoning but rather in the unmethodical and naïve language of stories, tales, legends, proverbs, commandments, sermons, epistles, and so forth. Why is this so? Does the primitive and immature state of human culture require it? Should this prove true, we could at once go a step further and conclude that religion is altogether the product of such a primitive mentality, and that it must be replaced by empirical or metaphysical knowledge when the intellect has grown mature enough to recognize the truth without imaginative veils and figurative language. This conclusion needs only be stated to be met with rejection.

It is wrong because the very nature of conceptual thought restricts the field of its application and validity. Thought ultimately leads to antinomies. Antinomies are the barriers that impede reason in invading the realm reserved to faith. In this realm the ultimate mystery is master, and imagination its suitable tool—not an arbitrary, not a dreaming, not a merely poetical imagination, but rather an imagination that serves accurately and adequately the high purpose to which it is summoned. If we reflect on the nature and function of imagination we can

easily discover the reason why precisely this source of non-rational and non-conceptual ideas can furnish the mind with the content of faith.

Imagination owes its power to its peculiar nature. It is not, like sensation or intellect, confined to either the realm of sense reality or of intellectual notions and general concepts, but it belongs rather to both realms and it is, therefore, suited to span the gulf between them. Imagination is at home in the sphere of change as well as in the sphere of changeless ideas; it is rooted as much in the visible as in the invisible world: indeed, its peculiar excellency consists exactly in its capacity of making visible what is invisible and of detecting the invisible element in the visible situation. *Imagination binds together what the thinking mind separates*; or more precisely: *it maintains the original unity* of the elements separated by abstract thought. Imagination is as realistic as it is idealistic; it is as sensuous as it is intellectual: it moves in a medium in which the extremes are still united and undissolved.

Imagination is thus much nearer to real life than either the senses or the intellect. The senses are confined to the particular instance; the intellect is confined to the general species. Imagination alone grasps the whole from which sensation and intellect abstract their objects. This whole is wider and deeper than these objects: it is the original source of them. Our real life is an affair not of the senses nor of the intellect; we live within the medium of imagination. To be sure, the senses and the intellect play an important part in life as well as in science; but they neither embrace the whole nor do they reach to the depths of life.

The content of our intrinsically personal life, of our heart and destiny, our guilt and our longing, our love and our fear, our hope and our despair—the content of our



real self—cannot be perceived or comprehended by reason alone. Whatever is personal stirs our imagination; it is imaginative in itself. This is the reason why the poet alone can describe life and why all merely scientific descriptions, be they ever so accurate within their own range, cannot disclose the unity of the outward and the inward aspects of experience, of its course and its meaning, of its appearances and its mystery. Imagination alone can perform this miracle, just because it is miraculous as compared with the naked senses and the sober intellect. The innermost kernel of life, however, is the relation to the ultimate mystery of life: this relation is the subject of faith. Therefore faith is necessarily imaginative.

There are many different kinds of imagination, since this central power of man's mind is active in all departments of mental activity. It permeates all his faculties and it conjoins them all. It is present even in sense perception, though serving the mere purpose of connection between the general concepts and the sense data. It is the main source of memory, though in the restricted form of reproduction. It operates not only in all fields of creative work, be they scientific or technical or artistic, but also in all professions, in politics, in social intercourse, and, most of all, in the vital centers of personal life. Here faith is rooted, and here religious imagination displays its momentous power.

Religious imagination displays the mystical intuition which exists in every human consciousness although it is not always recognized and acknowledged as such because most men are reared in a special religion which assumes the function of an interpreter of the ultimate mystery long before they themselves awake to the consciousness of this interpretation. They experience the mystery as interpreted from the very beginning of their conscious

life. Mystical intuition and religious interpretation are not disunited in their minds; they accept the interpretation as true and holy and they do not reflect upon the duality of intuition and interpretation, or they reflect upon it only in so far as religion reflects upon it. Indeed, the distinction between an original, not-yet-interpreted, mystical intuition and a secondary interpretation through religious imagination is philosophic only, since in real life these operations are not divided. It is philosophic thought that abstracts from the concrete imaginative content of faith and detects the mystical intuition as the source of faith.

I call the consciousness or awareness of the ultimate mystery a *mystical* intuition in order to distinguish it from any other intuition, perception, apprehension, or whatever may be the name given to the act of the mental grasping a certain object. The expression "mystical" should convey no misleading implications that this intuition is the privilege of a certain class of men, e.g., of the so-called mystics, who claim special spiritual experiences or gifts. On the contrary, this mystical intuition is a universal property possessed by all men. It is the simple awareness of the whole of existence that cannot be perceived and that nevertheless surrounds us. It is the consciousness of reality—not as an abstract category or as a philosophic concept, not as a particular real thing or process, but rather as the all-pervading unity of particular things and processes. Sometimes we call this unity "Universe." But this term signifies chiefly the physical whole, especially the world of celestial bodies, and is, therefore, not appropriate to express the object of the mystical intuition I am now describing.

Although it is difficult to say what this intuition is and impossible to say what its object is, just because intuition

is not comprehension, it cannot be doubted that man as man is possessed of it. Man is conscious of the whole of existence and he feels himself embraced by it. The unlearned man is perhaps more aware of this intuition than the learned one, because the latter may have supplanted it by intellectual concepts, theories, ideas, while the unlearned man has preserved the natural awe that is attached to this original intuition. The words of Jesus: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God" is applicable not only to the man rich in material, but even more so to the rich in intellectual and cultural goods, if these riches are not evaluated and balanced by faith. He who believes that he has found a scientific or philosophic or moral solution of ultimate problems would most probably deny that the intuition, underlying every real and every possible experience in life and thought, is mystical.

It is mystical precisely because its object cannot be comprehended and even less perceived. The Greek word "*myesthai*" hints at this impossibility: it means "to be silent." Mystical intuition is silent, not because it declines to express itself, but because its content or object is so indefinite and vague that it simply cannot be expressed as long as religious imagination does not make it articulate. *This is the religious function of imagination*, its most important function within its whole range of operations. Imagination, not reason, is privileged to receive the Word of God; it is the proper region of the mind in which the Holy can appear: religious imagination is holy ground indeed.

The idea of God is rooted in that ground, not in reason alone. Reason, unsupported by mystical intuition and religious imagination, remains destitute of the idea of

God; it can and it should ascend to the idea of the perfect being, the *ens realissimum*, the supreme Self, the absolute truth, the absolute good and the absolute beautiful, but all these ideas present in part ideals which man erects as signs of the direction to be followed by his striving and working, in part problems not to be solved. *Religion solves these problems*; and it solves them by means of imagination. Since the ultimate goal of man is hidden from reason, and the route to this goal is barred by antinomies, imagination is the only legitimate and appropriate tool of this solution, as revelation is the only legitimate and appropriate "method" by which this solution is brought about.

Religious imagination is operative not only in figurative speech and metaphorical expressions, in symbolic ideas and legends, in miraculous occurrences and mystical thought, in poetical comparisons and suggestive parables; *it is operative in the very idea of God*. God, as religion depicts Him, as personal, as the willing and acting figure of the Old and the New Testament, as the Creator of the world, as the Lawgiver, Judge and Lord of men, as the Ruler of nature and of history, as the power of Providence and as the Father of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of all mankind—the living God is no rational idea or the content of such an idea, He is rather to be apprehended in the imagination alone; the idea of God is not a true *concept*, it is a holy *image*.

An image has the power to present God as a living person; no concept could ever perform this rôle. Metaphysical thought may ultimately postulate the idea of a being whose essence is at the same time his existence (as the ontological proof suggests); whose potentiality and actuality are not separated as they are in all finite beings; who unites in himself will and deed, purpose and action;

who is creative where we are receptive only; who knows past, present, and future, and lives therefore in an eternal moment; who is as unchangeable as he is the cause and the end of all changes; who reconciles all opposites and who is, therefore, the source and the goal of man's own creativity and activity. But we cannot deceive ourselves with the conviction that this idea is more than the creature of our own thinking mind and the hypothesis of our own speculation. To be sure, it is a legitimate motive that urges our minds to pursue this highway of speculation; the concept of God, delineated by metaphysical thought, is not arbitrary, on the contrary, it is logically necessary. But all the same it is not satisfying religiously.

It does not ultimately satisfy our mind for two reasons. First of all, it lacks the reality of God which the heart longs for; second—and this second reason may convince even the atheist or the strictest rationalist—this idea of God is questionable in itself, it does not even satisfy reason. It would satisfy reason only if reason were able to demonstrate the postulated reconciliation of all opposites; if reason itself could perform the task of solving its highest problem, as Hegel presumed it could. Then, but only then, reason and not faith would rightly claim the primacy. But, as reason cannot clean its own house, as it rather encounters an insurmountable barrier just when it beholds the entrance to ultimate truth, not reason but faith must retain primacy in the knowledge of God.

The problematic character of the idea of God explains why the ontological proof of the existence of God always has had both adherents and opponents (and will have both in the future); why it was rejected by Kant and re-accepted by Hegel. There is truth in the proof and there is error also. The idea of God aims at the universal self of reality, at the ultimately Real. Thus it is obvious that

this idea should include the reality of its object. Even if the idea should not grasp the divine self adequately and completely, it refers to something that is real in any case; to something that is more real, indeed, than any other thing or being or entity, because this "something" contains admittedly the reality of everything in itself. Therefore, it is easier to doubt that the content of the supreme idea should be called by the holy name of God than to doubt that this content is real. Of course, even the term "real" or "reality" is problematic as applied to the ideal self. And this is the reason why Kant rejected the ontological proof altogether.

If we mean by "reality" the form of existence proper to objects of sensation and perception, this term certainly is not correct and cannot be applied to the divine self. Although we do not know this self by means of empirical or rational thought, and although we, therefore, must be careful in asserting or denying anything about it, nevertheless we do know that it is no mere object and that, therefore, the form of objective reality or existence is not pertinent to it. And from this point of view Kant is right in rejecting the ontological proof; existence (in the sense of objective existence) cannot be made the predicate of an idea which is not based on experience. On the other hand, the term "existence" or "reality," as applied to the objects of theoretical knowledge, points to a problem that cannot be solved within its own realm.

The reality of objects means that objects are not only the objects of theoretical knowledge but, at the same time, possible objects of our desire or will, and as such are the content of concepts like "property" or "tool" or "commodity" or "raw material"; or they are possible objects of pleasure, of admiration, of aesthetic value; they are artistic products like pictures or buildings; in short,

objects are more than theoretical objects, more than objects of sensation and perception, scientific exploration and explanation. Ultimately they are enclosed in the ultimate mystery and reveal this mystery to eyes which are prepared to recognize it. And it is just their *reality* to participate in the divine mystery; and reciprocally this mystery concerns just the *reality* of all entities. The term reality expresses the all-embracing capacity of the universal or ideal self.

The fact that objects are not only objects in the epistemological sense (objects of sense perception and of objective knowledge) but are also embraced by the all-embracing mystery, induced Kant to call them "things-in-themselves." They are things-in-themselves because they are real things and not phenomena only. They are real in so far as they are not dependent on the human mind or self. But to be independent of the human mind does not mean that they are independent of the infinite self of God. On the contrary, precisely because they do not depend on the human consciousness (and its categories), they depend instead on the divine. In fact, they depend on both the human self and the divine self; on the former in so far as they can become the objects of human knowledge (or of the human will), on the latter in so far as they have, besides their relation to the human mind, an immediate relation to the divine mystery.

The reality of the things-in-themselves is the reality of their universal truth, their being included in the unlimited spirit of God. This reality is therefore not confined to finite knowledge, it is a reality in the light of ultimate truth, and it is, therefore, comprised within ultimate reality. We may reserve the category of existence to those things and beings which are not ultimately real but instead real only as phenomena, as objects, as empirical events

or processes—in using the word “existence” thus, we remain faithful to its grammatical root, for in Latin “*existere*” is “to stand out,” or, more precisely, to stand forth as a single individual from a larger whole. In this case we would not be entitled to attribute existence to the ultimately real self; and, vice versa, we are not justified in attributing ultimate reality to existing things and beings.

The divine self is not real in the sense in which we call anything else real; the reason is not that this self is *unreal*, but that it is *reality itself*. All reality is invested in this self.<sup>4</sup> The ultimate meaning of the category “reality” means nothing save “being enclosed in the perfect unity.” This unity is to be conceived of as the unity of the ideal self—as far as it can be conceived of at all. This conceiving is admittedly not adequate, since the antinomies bar the way to an adequate concept. But we know that “an adequate concept” cannot even be demanded or postulated, because no concept is adequate to the idea of God. This idea transcends not only our *human* concepts, but all *concepts*, for a concept is always based on those distinctions and separations which must be abandoned when we envisage God.

This being so, we must wonder what value our inadequate idea of the Supreme Being may claim. Is it purely “speculative” in the bad sense of an illusory philosophizing? Has our idea no basis and foundation at all? I hope that the foregoing lectures may have demonstrated that this scruple should be dismissed. It is a real need which has prevailed on us to do the thing we have done, and

<sup>4</sup> The technical term for this concept of God and God’s relation to everything else is panentheism (first used by Christian F. Krause) as opposed to pantheism. Panentheism maintains that the world is in the spirit of God, while pantheism suggests that God is immanent in the world and nothing but the world itself.



to attain the idea we have discussed. Inadequacy pertains to the very nature of this idea, and any idea or concept which would be free from the restriction of that inadequacy would be false. Complete adequacy would violate the character of the universal mystery, and this character must be preserved.

No idea of God can be adequate and can satisfy reason as long as reason is not amplified by religious imagination. The idea of God is not conceptual, but mystical, and consequently it is an image. Could we demonstrate or postulate the existence of God or an existing God by means of logical thought, this God would be our creature, an idol, and not the true and living God who alone can fill us with awe. We cannot fear a demonstrated God, we cannot even love him. We cannot believe in him—the word “believe” taken in its religious purport. “To believe” in the religious sense does not mean *less* (as the rationalists are apt to interpret it) than “to understand” or “to comprehend” by means of logical thought; on the contrary, it means *more* than that: it means a kind of understanding and comprehension which understands and comprehends the mystical majesty of God. This understanding and comprehension has suggested the commandment: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” It is perhaps the least respected and the most violated of all the commandments, although it is the gravest and the most profound.

Logical thought cannot exist without separating what is united in reality and life, without defining and determining what is fluid and indeterminate in itself. Ultimate truth, therefore, transcends the entire realm of definitions; it transcends the realm of logic altogether. Even God Himself if we imagine Him as possessing an absolute intellect, does not think in the manner of our logic.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts." He does not think in terms of definitions and concepts, of propositions and inferences, for all these logical tools are insufficient to reach the goal towards which our intellect strives in its metaphysical pursuit. It is this insufficiency that leads to ultimate contradictions, as unavoidable as insoluble. They indicate that the supreme content of thought implies a unity that "passes all understanding."

Human thought is obliged to anatomize and to dissect the living body of reality; ultimate truth contains this reality whole and intact. Human thought cannot proceed without defining and distinguishing the content of its concepts, that is, without drawing sharp lines between them. The sharper the lines we draw the better are our definitions, the clearer and purer are our concepts, the truer the product of our effort. But we pay a terrible price for whatever success we attain. We cut asunder what is united, and we draw our lines through the vital heart of things. We are punished by the ultimate extinction of thought itself. Thought must die before it can grasp the Ultimate. It must renounce the quest, just when it approaches its goal. It ends in disaster: in the tragical fate of meeting contradictions which it cannot evade and which it cannot remove.

But the death of intellectual thought is not the death of the spirit. On the contrary, it is the very hour of birth for the spiritual life. Then it is revealed that a power higher than the intellect rightly and legitimately must assume the task not to be performed by the intellect: the power of revealing though mystical, of mystical, though revealing, imagination. This power does not dispose of reason save by preserving the very claims of reason. *The direction which has been decreed by thought is pursued by faith.* Reason itself is satisfied within the realm afforded

by faith. True faith differs from superstition precisely in that its imagination is not arbitrary, not wilful, not merely poetical as the imagination of all mythological religions is, but *charted and disciplined by the demands of reason itself*. Faith discharges duties too onerous for thought; religious imagination finally solves the problems of speculation though not by means of speculation. The solution granted is not and cannot be conceptual; it is imaginative, but at the same time it is in agreement with the postulates and ideals of reason.

Reason cannot postulate the existence of God, or if postulated, this existence cannot become the object of faith. Faith is no postulate, it is *the fulfillment of reason's postulate*. It presents what reason would like to present but is not able to present, just because reason demands a content that transcends its prerogative. The existence of the living God cannot be believed in so far as it is willed: it can be believed only because God Himself makes us believe it, for the existence of God transcends our will as it transcends reason. He transcends our will, for it is our will that arouses the gravest objections to the existence of God by perverting itself and so refuting His existence. Indeed, the severest test against the existence of an omnipotent and morally perfect being is the test executed by man himself in doing evil: it is a test not of thought, but of deed; a practical, not a theoretical test.

A will that is prone to do evil has neither right nor power to prove the existence of God. It requires the higher right and the higher power of Him who has created man to redeem man's will. This redemption is the true, the only possible and the only effective proof of His existence. Indeed, the whole content of revelation concerns redemption. Creation and Fall are the preamble of the drama in which God redeems man. But even this preamble

presupposes the existence of the Redeemer. The very fact that the supreme and perfect being has created the world—this world with all its imperfection, its frightful cruelties, its incomprehensible distribution of gifts and effects, its crimes and its temptations—depends upon the conclusion that God is the Redeemer. He can be the Creator only because He is the Redeemer; as He can be the Redeemer only because He is the Creator.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Image of the Creator*

THE BOUNDARY line between philosophy and religion is identical with the boundary line between the conceptual idea and the imaginative reality of God. The reality of God, thus, might be taken to be that reality which embodies the general and abstract idea "*in individuo*," and "*in concreto*." But this statement, though not directly false, nevertheless does not express the full truth about the relation between the idea and the reality of God, for God differs from all other real entities and so does the relation between the idea of Him and His reality. The idea of a tree is general because there are many trees in the world which belong to the general class; the same is true as to all objects of nature. That is not the case with God.

He (the biblical God) is unique, like the world itself. The idea of God seems, therefore, to be nearer to His reality than the idea of a tree to any particular tree. Whereas a particular tree differs from other trees, so that its particular features cannot be general features of the idea, the particular features of the only God could be contained in His idea and could be derived from it. In other words, the idea and the reality of God might be one and the same; the idea might be the reality appearing under certain circumstances, and the reality might be the idea envisaged without restrictions. This trend of thought is very suggestive, the more so because God cannot be

real like the objects of sense perception or like ourselves. He is invisible, like the concepts of our mind, incorporeal and not confined to space and time. This kinship between the biblical God and the realm of the ideas was the source of all attempts to interpret God by means of Platonic philosophy; it was the source of Christian dogmatics and metaphysics from Origen to Thomas Aquinas. It was the source of the ontological proof.

But this powerful development did not realize that the step from the idea of God to the real, the living, God is even greater and more problematic than is the step from the idea of a tree to an actual tree. The tree can be viewed as an example of the idea; it can be perceived with theoretical interest only; we can neglect the idea that the real tree is included in the mystery of the Universe and that it, therefore, is more than merely a particular example of the general idea. That is not so with God. We have to abandon the realm of theoretical ideas completely in order to approach the reality of God. It is not possible to meet God with our intellect or with our reason only, the Platonist notwithstanding. God is not the idea of the ideal self transplanted in the sphere of reality or contemplated as a real entity. The living God is no mere illustration or embodiment of the abstract idea, for such an idea is inadequate to express what it should express. It fails to grasp what is the very nature of the living God: the mystery of His existence. This existence is by no means accidental as compared with His essence; on the contrary, it is the very essence of the biblical God to be existent and not only a notion. (This truth is transformed into an argument by the ontological proof of the existence of God). But this necessary connection of essence and existence cannot be demonstrated, nor even comprehended, by rational thought; on the contrary, it marks

the boundary line between thought and faith, philosophy and religion.

This boundary line is indicated by the necessary antinomies which thought encounters in dealing with the notion of the universal ideal self. These antinomies reveal the mystery in a rational form, indeed, in a negative form only. Reason can reveal the nature of the mystery only in a negative form, because the mystery denies precisely this capacity of reason. The antinomy expresses this denial by means of reason. Reason, limiting itself, becomes dialectical or self-contradictory. Imagination, as compared with reason, is able to express the mystery in a positive form. It is true that even imagination cannot pass beyond a certain limit; the image cannot exhaust the depth of the mystery; it is scarcely an adequate representation of it. But the image, precisely because it is not rational, has a greater power of penetrating and representing the mysterious character of the divine. This means that the image can bring about the solution of the antinomy at a level beyond or above reason. The image makes it possible that, not the abstract idea of God, but God Himself enters the human consciousness, the human heart and imagination in a way similar to the appearance of a dramatic figure on the stage. The difference between the living God and such a figure is analogous to the difference between real life and the theatre. It is the drama of life, which is not a drama in the poetical sense of the word, that is enacted when God and man meet. It is the real self, and not imagination only, that is addressed by God.

The term "Existential," as Kierkegaard has coined it, hints at this transition from the idea to the reality of God. The Existential attitude toward God, be it the attitude of a community or that of an individual, the attitude of a prophet or that of the common man, is always deter-

mined by the concrete situation in which the human soul meets God; and this situation can never be construed or reconstrued by means of thought. It is a living situation which embraces the whole totality of the personal life. This totality can be analyzed by the intellect, but it cannot be rebuilt out of the analyzed elements. This is impossible, not only because the analyzed elements must always be general and abstract, whereas the situation is individual and concrete; but chiefly because the situation contains something more than the sum total or synthesis of the elements: the immediacy of life, and the universal mystery which embraces all elements and all units of elements as contained in the situation. The mental instrument which equips us to deal with the immediate situation, which alone enables us to be aware of it, is not intellect, nor will, but the imagination. Imagination accompanies us, so to speak, every step we take in our life. It is imagination which circumscribes the horizon of our consciousness at every moment, even when we are not consciously aware of it, when we are paying no attention to it.

Imagination alone can integrate all single impressions and impulses of the soul and can produce that concrete and individual consciousness which characterizes our relation to the totality of the real at any definite moment. Therefore, imagination is always present where and when we encounter the universal mystery. Pragmatism accordingly is right when it declares we must renounce the attempt to deal with ultimate truth in a dialectical way: for every concrete situation we deal with in a practical way, and this way alone is possible. But Pragmatism forgets that an image of ultimate truth is included in every practical situation, and that this image is truly religious, or, if not, then it is pseudo-religious and superstitious. (It



is superstitious even though its source be science, or the pragmatic philosophy itself.)

We are accustomed to say that we live in the world, but too often we do not consider what we mean by this expression. The word "world," as used in common speech, is vague and fluid like most words. And even science and philosophy strive in vain to define the meaning of this term. We know that we live in a coherent whole, but this whole has so many aspects and so many segments that we cannot find the bond which holds them together. Therefore a system of philosophy must ever be postulated, but never satisfactorily built. The whole is a mystery. Nietzsche is right in pointing out that a *mythos* always closes the horizon of a culture. But everything depends on what kind of image is central in the mythical background of the cultural world. In any case this image cannot be produced by the intellect, it cannot be the result of philosophic reflections. It must be alive, like the meanings of words used in daily life. As it interprets the ultimate meaning of life, so also does it originate in life. Of course, the word "life" again has no meaning that could be fixed by science. It was the error of Bergson that he, in spite of his proclamation that intuition is the proper source of philosophic knowledge, nevertheless in the end used scientific categories and concepts as a means for the interpretation of life. Life includes the mystery of man and the universal mystery. Imagination alone supplies the language which can interpret it. The words which touch upon this mystery and crystallize it into an image have not the same kind of meaning as terms in logical discussions or symbols in mathematical and physical equations. They are, compared with the latter, indefinite, changing from situation to situation, and from period to period. They partake of the

ever-changing life. They grow and fade, are enlarged and shrink. They cover a certain scope of possible meanings and contain the germs of new meanings which develop from them. The Bible is rich in examples of such developments. The prophetic words concerning the coming Christ in the Old Testament confirm this peculiarity of religious speech.

The word "God" itself is such a word. It is by no means a term or a concept subject to definition. It is no notion, but a living image. It is no symbol, for it exceeds and excels every possible definition. It cannot be applied in any philosophic context without losing the peculiar power and flavor which make it appropriate to express its religious sense. Logical speculation or reflection endeavors to transform the changing and dynamic multitude of meanings that cluster about this word into clear and well-defined terms. But it is just this undefined and unstable mass of meanings which is adapted to the peculiar task of this central religious word. For religion itself is life and ceases to perform its task when life has departed. Life depends on religion, because religion interprets the source of life in the human sense: the mystical intuition of the whole. It is the extraordinary virtue of the religious image that it combines both an intuitive power and a metaphysical truth which cannot be expressed by metaphysical means but which is the ultimate end of all metaphysical endeavors. The Word which contains this treasure has, therefore, been honored and esteemed, nay almost venerated and adored by the Christian religion. It is the holy shrine in which the divine mystery is hidden and at the same time revealed.

It was a fateful circumstance in the history of Christian thought that the Greek word "*logos*" was ambiguous and signified a logical concept and the spoken or written word

as well. Thus Greek speculation readily coalesced in the fourth Gospel with Christian imagination, and the chasm between both spheres apparently was closed. But even a Catholic thinker like Étienne Gilson must confess that the problem which the early Christian theologian faced and tried to solve, the problem of expressing the meaning of the Gospel in terms of Greek philosophic speculation, was perhaps insoluble. "If we look at this problem as historians, and view it through fifteen centuries of history, our first impulse is to declare that such a problem was not susceptible of a satisfactory solution. Perhaps it was not."<sup>1</sup> *Certainly* it was not. And Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* detected and disclosed the deeper reasons why it was and must remain insoluble. Kant did not say, however, that it is the power and the secret strength of the "word" to accomplish what reason is impotent to perform. And this insight, which Kant missed, is as important and significant as the critical rejection of an adequate rational solution of that problem.

Philosophic speculation and religious imagination are contrary since logical method and the notional sphere must be maintained by speculation but must be abandoned by imagination; nevertheless they can integrate each other. They do not exclude each other; it can even be said that there is no philosophic speculation which is not affected by religious imagination to a certain degree, and that there is no religious imagination which does not contain a necessary element of speculation. Thus the writer of Genesis can be called a great thinker, although his kind of thinking, of course, is inspired and therefore revelatory. But despite this connection, they are also to be distinguished with respect to the different functions they serve. And to draw the boundary line between them is very

<sup>1</sup> *God and Philosophy*, 1941, p. 47.

important, in order to avoid mutual trespassing. Much damage has been wrought by such invasions. Even Augustine, to whom Gilson refers in the quotation above, did not respect this demarcation when he confused Christian faith and Greek wisdom in his early writings.<sup>2</sup> Gilson suggests that Thomas Aquinas succeeded in transforming the biblical name of God: "I am who I am" into a philosophic concept, by expressing the act of existence as the very essence of God.<sup>3</sup> He insists that Thomas Aquinas, therefore, was able to conceive of God as the Creator of the world, whereas Aristotle had to confine God to a mover of the world, because the Greek was not aware of the problem of existence. One is doubtful whether Aquinas really succeeded in this respect.

As long as we dwell in the sphere of philosophic concepts we cannot grasp God as an existing being that causes other things and beings to exist. We, therefore, cannot transform the living and creating God into the content or meaning of any philosophic idea whatsoever. That would be to transform the genuine revealed image into a graven image. The living God can address man by saying: "I am who I am," just because it is impossible to comprehend him as a living God by means of rational thought, and vice versa. A person who speaks to me is, in speaking, not the content of a theoretical comprehension. A person and a theory do not pertain to the same sphere. The person belongs to the sphere of life; he is an "I," as

<sup>2</sup> Comp. e.g., the remark in "*de vera religione*": Plato and Plotinus "*paucis mutatis verbis atque sententiis Christiani fierent.*" About the problem of Augustine's early period see P. Alfarié, *L'évolution intellectuelle de S. Augustin*, 1918, and Karl Holl, *Augustins innere Entwicklung*, Abh. d. pr. Ak., 1923. Both underline the "pagan" feature of Augustine's Christianity in the first period after his conversion perhaps too strongly; the opposite view is represented by E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de Saint Augustin*, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Lc. p. 63 et seq.

I am. He evokes my response by addressing me, and this response is a practical and personal act. When I comprehend God in a theoretical or speculative way I am no longer a person. I am no longer that individual self that is personally addressed, challenged, called, blessed or punished. I am exclusively "reason" or "understanding" or "mind" and I do not claim to be anything else. I cannot combine in one and the same act the attitude of theoretical comprehension and that of prayer or submission to the will of God and acknowledgement of his majesty. Comprehending the idea of God in speculation I do not comprehend the living God; believing I do so, I transform my idea into an idol. We approach nearest to the God of Augustine in the writings (especially in the *Confessions*) where he invokes Him personally and dramatizes his relation to Him. The living personality of God emerges only when He speaks or when the saint speaks to Him.

The concept of "being" or of "to-be" is as universal as the concept of reality or of the Real. This is not the concept of an individual or of a living being that can accost me and act on me. And I cannot love or fear this universal concept "to-be" without making it an idol. So far as I love and revere God He is no longer that universal concept, but instead a living entity, an individual being though a universal individual who meets me and whom I meet in my living imagination, and who touches my heart hereby. It is true, the idea of the ideal self suggests the identification of universality and individuality, of essence and existence, of thought and reality. And the definition of God as that being in whom those oppositions are no longer opposed, but united with each other, characterizes the nature of the ideal self. But precisely this definition demonstrates that reason here confronts a problem not to be solved by means of reason. It is a new version of the

basic antinomy which indicates the limit of rational thought.

How "being," though a universal, can exist as an individual self which commands me and punishes or loves me, which I can fear or love, that is no longer a question answerable by any philosophic method. It is true that those opposite concepts should ultimately merge, that reason itself demands this ultimate fusion. But the necessity of this demand can only be demonstrated in a negative way: by showing that the separation leads finally to unavoidable contradictions. Thus reason can achieve a negative unification. But the positive synthesis can be effected by religious imagination only. Aristotle appreciated this limit of reason when he did not endeavor to conceive of God as a living personality who cares for man and has intercourse with him. It is true that he also conceives of the highest being as that being in whom potentiality and energy (or actuality) are no longer to be distinguished; and he also touched in that way upon the limit of reason by envisaging the problem of the "*coincidentia oppositorum*." But on the other hand, he restricted his theological concept to the sphere of rational thought. His God is a God of thought; indeed God is nothing save perfect thought itself, conceived as activity and as life, but this God is no living God, no personality.<sup>4</sup> He does not exist as an individual being.

In the concepts of being and reality reason confronts the antinomy between thought and reality, or between universality and individuality, when we take the meaning of reality in an ontological context (and not merely as an epistemological category). The concept of reality means precisely the opposite of a concept; it means reality itself.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Clement C. J. Webb, *God and Personality*, Gifford Lectures 1918-1919, p. 73 ff.

Now, what does this distinction suggest? Are we able to express what we mean when we speak of reality? Is not reality in so far as we think it (and we must think it to put the question) just a universal concept or, more precisely, the content of such a concept? As long as we are eager to learn what reality is, and to answer this question, we do not reflect that whatever we may discover in this way, remains on the level of mere or pure thought. Thus we face, without realizing it, the antinomy at the outset of our undertaking. We strive to seize, not the content of a concept, but reality as such, the Real, that is, that which is present in every real thing and being, process and event, relation and activity, nay which is the real source and origin of all these lesser realities. We want to find the power which creates what is real in each special case. But in the end we must admit that we can never abandon the realm of universal shadows as long as we remain loyal to reason and logic. This intrinsic tragedy of all metaphysics was discovered and disclosed for all time by Kant. Natural theology cannot surmount the inescapable.

The last great European metaphysician was fully aware of the difficulty of his enterprise. Hegel therefore, began his *logic* with the category of being and proceeded to the opposite, to nothing, by noting that they are, though opposed, nevertheless united with each other. Indeed, this is the most abstract formulation of the antinomy. Being, as such, is always universal and conceptual (or notional), but being, as acting and creating, is not only universal and conceptual, it is existent and individual at the same time; it is its own logical opposite. If we call "being" the universal, then the individual is non-being. In every individual thing, process or action is a negative element compared with the pure affirmation of being as such. We confront the mystery of that "nothing" out of

which God created the world. God, though being, as such, faces opposition: nothing, as such. This opposition makes creation possible. Being is creative in so far as it unites with nothing, or in so far as it is united with nothing from the start. But Hegel, though superior in his logical method, has succeeded no better than Aquinas in transforming the Creator into a philosophic concept. His attempt was frustrated by the same difficulties. It is true that Hegel, instructed by Kant, was aware of those difficulties, and he used them in the hope of mastering them. This is the function of the dialectical method. But it was an illusion to believe that the systematic development of all antinomies could overcome the contradictions inherent in them. Not philosophical speculation, but religious imagination alone, can perform this supreme task, by abandoning completely the realm and the level of rational thought.

The impossibility of a speculative natural theology which could produce a conceptional idea of the Creator turns out to be, not a deficiency of the human mind, but the necessary consequence of the peculiar excellence of the religious imagination. Not only is the human understanding thwarted by this task, but no understanding whatever could perform it. God, as the religious mind encounters him, cannot be made the content of any conceptional idea, however expanded the power of understanding or reason. Life is the sphere in which the dichotomies of the philosophizing mind have not yet arisen. Life is the sphere wherein all separations, all distinctions, and thus all "clear and distinct" concepts originate, which contains them all, but in a non-conceptional, in an undeveloped, an implicit form. This form I call "immediacy." And this immediacy cannot be reconstructed by speculative thought. The lan-



guage of this immediacy is imaginative. Imagination alone can meet the task of articulating the immediate sphere without transposing it to the level of philosophic reflection. Immediacy is characterized by the presence of mystical intuition. Rational thought tries to rationalize this intuition and in doing so it must destroy the immediate unity of life and sunder it by forming logical concepts. It is true, life itself offers the occasions of philosophizing; it prepares the way for the discrimination and reflection in which rational thought consists. Life itself philosophizes to a certain degree. But the conceptions formed in such a way are not "clear and distinct," on the contrary, they are raw material compared with the products of philosophic reflection and speculation.

What appears as raw material, when we compare it with clearly defined logical concepts, has its own value and virtue when we consider the function of imagination in religious language. Words like God, paradise, angel, heaven, creation, grace, and so on, are not well-defined; on the contrary, they are enveloped in a mist. But it is just this misty atmosphere they emerge from which is adapted to the mystical background of their meaning. The lack of clarity and exactitude is a logical deficiency, but at the same time it is characteristic of whatever terms occur spontaneously in the religious realm. In this realm words signify something that is still embedded in the original matrix and immediacy of life, and not yet freed from the grip of the mystical intuition which embraces all the content of unreflective consciousness. Their logical weakness is just their religious strength. There are imaginative elements in them which cannot be eliminated without taking away their religious significance. This imaginative character of all religious ideas is more adequate to the solution

of the speculative antinomies than any logical method can ever be.

The transformation of the religious images into logical concepts, as performed by dogma and dogmatics is, therefore, a dubious undertaking. The images lose their immediacy, the clouds which surround them are cleared away, sharp lines appear and logical demands are fulfilled. But the content of the religious images must needs be preserved and it contrasts strangely with the rigid form to which it is forced to submit. The contradictions, inherent in the meanings of all religious ideas, but not noticed as long as the imaginative form is unshattered, now become visible and disturbing. Imagination tolerates contradictions, because they agree with the immediacy of life in which contrasts are not yet developed and sharpened. There are no contradictions proper to the imaginative realm before it is rationalized. The logical medium of dogma awakes the slumbering oppositions and generates contradictions. Thus dogma and dogmatics always hover in a twilight between the imaginative, mystical sphere from which the dogmatic semi-concepts are derived and the sphere of conceptual ideas. Neither sphere comes properly into its own; the somewhat precarious function of dogma and the never quite satisfying systems of dogmatics arise out of this ambiguity. Dogma seems to be more advanced and thus superior to the naïve form of images and imaginative stories, but the fact is, it marks no advance but is rather the product of a mixture of different interests. Dogma is like a bird in a cage, like a butterfly pinned in the collection of an entomologist or like a flower pressed by a botanist.

It is the peculiar performance of religious imagination that it does not separate the elements which rational

thought is obliged to discern and that it, therefore, is not driven to unavoidable contradictions, as is philosophic definition and reflection. Religious imagination dwells upon the immediate realm of life in which the contrast between the subjective sphere of ideas and images, and the objective sphere of real things and beings, is not yet developed. It does not reflect on itself, it looks at the content of the images, as sense perception does not reflect on subjective impressions, but rather perceives through them the objects. Indeed, religious imagination takes the place of religious perception; it is a spiritual and mystical perception. It is the immense virtue and the unique power of the religious image that it is taken without reflection or naïvely. The distinction between image and thing is not imaginative, it is reflective, and does not correspond to the real meaning and the proper function of the image. Imagination, in its religious application, is realistic; it is the instrument which enables our mind to envisage God and to experience His will and His purpose; it is the organ of religious perception.

The realists and empiricists misunderstand and misinterpret this realistic religious apprehension by minimizing the tremendous difference between religious and sense perception, and by making God the object of an experience of the type of other empirical experiences. They do not recognize the central character of the religious object: the mystical, that is, the superempirical nature of God. They do not respect the function of religious imagination. Some theologians mistake the religious image for a *symbol*. The distinctive difference between an image and a symbol derives from the realistic purport of religious imagination. The consciousness of an image is one with the consciousness of its content; the content alone is intended and per-

ceived through the medium of the image. We pray to God, not to the image of God, though we see Him by means of imagination only. The consciousness of a symbol, on the other hand, is always aware of the chasm between symbol and what is symbolized. The kernel of religious knowledge is not symbolic, but imaginative, though symbols, like parables, play an important part in religious communication. Imagination is the proper medium of revelation. Of course, if we *reflect* on religious imagination, we leave the sphere of its immediacy and we descry the duality of image and what is imaged, and we cannot reconstruct the original immediate unity by means of philosophic reflection. Religious imagination, compared with philosophic reflection, is a paradise lost. But while man cannot return to the paradise of a sinless life, he can return to the paradise of religious imagination, for he never ceases to possess the power of imagination.

The historical fact that the Christian faith conquered the ancient world and subjugated Greek philosophy by means of religious imagination shows the possibility, and even the necessity, of such a rebirth. Religious imagination is superior to speculation and reflection precisely because it is naïve and has not yet abandoned the realm of immediate life. It is not only the moral innocence of the child which inspired Jesus to point to him as the noblest pattern, it is also the lack of reflection and the immediacy of his imagination. To a child God is immediately what He is in the child's own soul. Image and reality are not yet distinguished. The child experiences the original meaning and function of the image. Therefore, his experience of the living God is not broken or disturbed by reflective doubts or inhibitions. It is the business of philoso-

phy to vindicate the right and the truth of this childish attitude, a right and a truth higher than any that could be demanded by reflective knowledge.

The words "creation" and "Creator" mean something other than the logical term "cause." In religion God is not the cause of the world in a logical sense. The category of causality presupposes a coherent multitude of different entities which did not exist before the creation; it also presupposes succession of time in which the cause produces the effect, and this succession also needs to be created. Augustine refers to all these antinomies.<sup>5</sup> When we refrain from making such presuppositions the category of causality is completely empty, as Kant has shown. The biblical image of creation is a non-logical analogy of causation, of a special kind of causation. It resembles the creative act of the artist who creates the work of art. It is the Word that creates the world: "And God *said*, Let there be light: and there was light." It is this *word* and not reason or the *logical logos* that made all things in the beginning. It is the creative word of imagination, not the Platonic Idea or Form that was in the beginning with God and that was God.

Origen, who was the first to philosophize about the Christian God, about the mystery of creation and about the relation between Christ and the Logos from the standpoint of a Platonist, though frequently using the doctrine of the Ideas as the patterns of all things in the mind of God or His son, nevertheless rejects explicitly in a passage of his "First Principles" the Platonic version of the Ideas, perhaps because he feels that the Word, in the sense of the fourth Gospel, is not the Logos of the philosopher. God is creative, not like the technician who

<sup>5</sup> De Gen. c. Man. I, 3.

by virtue of his knowledge acts to achieve a purpose, but like the genius in the realm of art, as Michael B. Foster says.<sup>6</sup> It should be added, however, that this interpretation does not sufficiently emphasize the moral aspect of the biblical Creator and the moral purpose involved in His Creation. God is not only an artist, the world not alone a poem or a drama. He is at the same time the Lawgiver, Judge and Sovereign in the moral realm, and He is especially these as the Creator of man. Artistic genius thus may constitute an element in the image of the creative God but this element does not exhaust His nature. On the other hand, Kant's idea of the moral Author of nature fails completely to take into consideration this

<sup>6</sup> *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel*, 1935, ch. VI. Foster discusses the conception of sovereignty and, in doing so, he shows that the political philosophy of Hegel has no true conception of sovereignty because it has none of creation and of the creative mind. Foster contrasts reason and the creative mind. Reason comprehends the essence of objects or the aim of the will by separating the essence from the accidental existence or the aim, conceived apart from the act of creation. "The act of creation is governed by no preconceived end; therefore essence is not discernible from accident without the product of creation, and the created object, though it can be criticized, is not to be criticized by reference to a standard conceived apart from it" (p. 186). Hegel ignores this difference, therefore he holds that it is possible to discover and to expound the plan of Providence by means of rational thought. He rationalizes the idea of creation and substitutes for it the conception of technical production which carries out a preconceived idea. "Hegel is not really replacing religious imagery by conceptual apprehension of the truth which it contains; he is replacing the Christian idea of Creation by the Greek one of *Techne*" (p. 204).

I am indebted to Foster's argument for considerable illumination. But, perhaps one might improve his criticism of Hegel by recalling the fact that Hegel tried to transform reason itself into a creative activity and that, therefore, his conception of an end is no longer to be distinguished from that of the creative act. But it must be added that Hegel, though intending this identification of speculation and creation, nevertheless is not successful in this respect, and that, therefore, all his conceptions pretend to a meaning which they actually cannot attain. I agree perfectly with Foster in this, that Hegel "is not really replacing religious imagery by conceptual apprehension."

element of genius in the nature of God. This deficiency may be connected with Kant's failure to realize the function of religious imagination altogether.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the image of the Creator must be seized by imagination, and not by reason. The Catholic philosophy which held and holds that natural theology can attain to the idea of the Creator is mistaken as long as this theology is based on reason alone, and not on religious imagination. But if it is based on religious imagination, it is no longer natural, i.e., rational theology. This theology cannot rival imagination in the latter's peculiar sphere; it ends where those antinomies begin. These are "solved" by spiritual imagination. This insight is the *only* contribution which philosophy can make to the interpretation of the biblical God, and to biblical theology. Reason cannot bring about knowledge of God as Creator; it is so remote from performing this task that it cannot even fully comprehend the positive content of the revealed image, just because it is an image. No religious image can be translated into the language of logical concepts without losing something of its imaginative character and meaning, for the meaning of an image is itself imaginative. The imaginative character of the image inheres not only in its aesthetic form, but in its content as well. The imaginative form is not externally imposed upon the kernel of its meaning. The meaning of the image is engendered by its form, and this union of form and content constitutes the peculiar power and vigor of the image, its capacity to express what mystical intuition perceives.

The image of God as the Creator "solves" in this way the antinomy of reality by unifying its two elements; the elements of abstract universality and of concrete individuality,

or of thought and of the Real.<sup>7</sup> God, the Creator, is both a real self and the all-embracing mystery of the Universe. He embodies the highest concept of speculation, the idea of the ideal self, and He preserves the character of the mystery at the same time. Reason by itself can never achieve this consummation without being untrue to its native standards.

The image of the Creator solves the antinomy contained in the ontological concept of being and reality, and at the same time the antinomy contained in the epistemological idea of the ideal self. The image of the Creator "proves" the existence of God by its own superior means which induces us to speak of revelation. Thought alone cannot abandon the sphere of the abstract and universal and enter the sphere of the concrete and individual, the sphere of real life. Faith alone, based on imagination, qualifies for this task. Faith needs imagination, for imagination exclusively can bridge the gulf in man's nature and connect thought and reality, the universal and the individual, the ideal and its immediate presence. The image of the Creator represents the actual accomplishment, a concrete embodiment of what in the human sphere is an ideal to be striven for. What reason cannot achieve is acknowledged by faith as the most genuine reality.<sup>8</sup>

Reason becomes entangled in inescapable and insoluble antinomies when it deals with the problem of a first cause or author of the world. Imagination does not solve this

<sup>7</sup> Comp. the discussion of the problem of Creation in *God and Personality* by Clement C. J. Webb, 1918, who takes a standpoint akin to that of my lectures, but not exactly the same.

<sup>8</sup> Plato probably would have approved of the biblical God to a higher degree than he did of the Greek gods, since the moral claims he raises concerning the content of religious images are much better complied with by the biblical God than they were in mythology. Therefore it is understandable that the first Christian thinkers adhered to Plato and tried to combine his philosophic outlook with that of Scripture.



problem by rational means, but reason can be satisfied with its solution after having learned that there is no possible *rational* solution at all, and that the only *reasonable* solution is that offered by religious imagination. The image of the Creator causes us to marvel at the infinite creativity of the divine spirit. More cannot be done, and more should not be attempted, because the mysterious character of this spirit should not be falsified by any effort at logical clarity; instead this character must be emphasized, for it is the very essence of God to remain hidden even when He reveals Himself. The image of the Creator is not merely the imaginative illustration of a logical concept, namely of the first cause of the world, rather it expresses what mystical intuition experiences: the relation of everything to the universal mystery. In the light of this intuition everything is united with everything else, not by means of a logical coherence or by the medium of space and time, but by the common lot of being included in the same mystery and depending upon it. Thus the world becomes a unity not in any logical but in a mystical sense. And at the same time it becomes the world of God, His creation, the work of His spirit. Mystical intuition is silent; but God speaks in our mind through the religious imagination, and thus He reveals Himself. This is the only "proof" of the existence of God. God alone can demonstrate His existence, and He can demonstrate it in no other way.

The total content of all our experiences in so far as they are embraced by the ultimate mystery is called creation in biblical language. The mystery itself is called God. The word, creation, hints at the peculiar relation between the experienced world and the universal mystery. This relation is not a logical one, it is not a relation which can be found within experienced contents of the world.

The category of causality is contained in the word "creation," but with an indirect, imaginative meaning which conceals and reveals this relation at the same time. We go astray if we attempt to translate it into terms of rational thought, even in those of Kant's pure practical reason. God as the Creator is not "the moral author of nature." This term is even inconsistent with Kant's own system, because God, as postulated by pure practical reason, should be the moral author not only of nature, but of the world, that is, the totality of the natural and the moral realm, or of the sphere in which the laws of nature, *and* of that in which the moral laws rule. Otherwise man would not be created by God in so far as he is a *moral being*, and the moral purpose of the creation, namely the harmony between man's moral value and his portion of happiness, would not be brought about. On the other hand, the idea of a moral author of nature is expected to unify the two realms, that of nature and that of morality. If this unification, under the title "world," must be presupposed *the whole idea no longer functions in the way assumed by Kant*. Indeed, if there is a world in which not only the laws of nature, but also the moral laws rule, and if the latter have preponderance, as the principle of the primacy of pure practical reason over theoretical reason demands, then it is no longer necessary to add the idea of a moral author of the world. This world is a moral world in itself. What urges Kant to proceed from morality to faith is the immorality of man. But just this immorality should have prevented him from teaching that reason can attain to faith.

This consideration confirms anew the insight that the idea of a moral author of nature is not postulated and cannot be postulated by reason; in Kant's own case, it is rather the remnant of his Christian faith. It is the philo-

sophic transcription of the biblical Creator. But this transcription is insufficient and unjustified because it is founded on reason alone, and because it omits the mystical nature of the biblical image. Reason, as such, is not obliged and not even entitled to rehabilitate the category of causality for the purpose of faith. It is the religious imagination which carries out this rehabilitation by using the logical and empirical category in a metaphorical and mythical sense. The religious imagination returns to the sphere of perception; it solves the speculative problem of the ideal self by presenting it in the fashion of a real self but at the same time it excludes the possibility of taking it as a real self in a literal, human sense. The result is the revealed image of the creative God.

This image performs what is beyond the abstract concept of an ultimate unity or an *ens realissimum*: it unifies the manifold of impressions and impulses, of interests and instincts, of ideas and purposes which we call the world; and at the same time it assures us that this whole, in spite of its imperfection and deficiency, is not only a physical but also a moral whole. Thus, the world is no longer "nature" in Kant's sense, but rather the Creation of God. The image of the Creator permits, on the one hand, the panoramic vision of one and the same world, and, on the other hand, the distinction between this world and the divine Creator. Thus we are enabled to comprehend the world as the world of God, but at the same time as a world separated from God, created as a work of art is created by the artist. If we neglect the relation between God and the world, then we neglect the mystical intuition and look at the world with "worldly" eyes only: we comprehend the world and ourselves as if the world were self-dependent, as if it did not point toward something beyond its limits, as if it were not mysterious at all.

The world in the biblical meaning is not the cosmos of the Greeks; their cosmos comprises the gods. Even Plato's world-architect and Aristotle's world-mover belong to the cosmos, as the commander-in-chief belongs to his army. There is no room for the mystery that embraces the whole and that makes the total a whole. Therefore, Greek philosophy could tolerate the duality between matter and form and the relative independence of matter from form and from God. The cosmos has an aesthetic or a logical unity; but it has no mystical unity. The difference between the ancient and the Christian conception of the world is marked by the fact that God, according to the Bible, transcends the cosmos of the Greeks, and therefore all reason and knowledge. Although Augustine and Aquinas philosophize with the conceptual instruments of the Greeks, their conception of God transcends the frame of the Greeks by virtue of its mystical character. Nevertheless ancient conceptions of the cosmos are partially maintained in medieval philosophy: there is no break between the opposites: "*Gratia perficit naturam.*" Both are united in a higher totality, which reminds one of the ancient cosmos: the hierarchy of all things and beings from soulless matter to the deity. Medieval religion and philosophy have always retained certain features of the ancient view.

Protestant faith emphasized the chasm between God and world and stressed the transcendent nature of God. To be sure, this view was brought about by a new conception of the relation, not between God and the world, but between God and man. The medieval standpoint preserved the ancient conception of man as an animal endowed with reason. Man was regarded as created in the likeness of God precisely because he is rational. Man is rational by nature and this prerogative entitles and en-

ables him to approach deity. Faith is based on reason, and reason is a natural property. Modern philosophy discovered and emphasized the unique position of man in the world. Reason is not a natural property, but rather the lawgiver of nature: Kant made this insight the cornerstone of his transcendental philosophy. Protestantism maintains a position *between* the medieval and the modern standpoint. Man, as a natural being, is not able to reach God. Though created in the likeness of God, man is corrupted by original sin and no longer privileged, in spite of his reason, to attain divinity. Reason cannot lead him to God, and faith is not based on reason but on the gift of God, on His grace. Faith elevates man above the level of nature *and* reason. Protestantism thus destroys the cosmological unity completely. There is a break between nature and grace, between the world and God, in so far as man is concerned, and this cleft can be overcome only by God.

The principle of modern thought, consummated in Kant's "Copernican revolution," makes man the intellectual center of the world. Man is no longer a mere part of nature. In so far as he is properly man, he is not a rational animal, but a transcendental being, i.e., a being that is elevated above the level of nature in the same sense as God is. Indeed, the transcendental nature of man implies that man in a special respect is the creator of nature: reason regarded as a transcendental faculty prescribes the laws to nature as it prescribes the moral law to man. The laws of nature are no longer *cosmic* laws, as in the cosmological view of antiquity, nor are they any longer *divine* laws as in the theological view of the Middle Ages; they are laws by virtue of *human* transcendental reason. Accordingly, the moral law is not a law given man as a rational animal by nature or by God, but rather a law

given to man as a natural animal by man as a transcendental self. The absoluteness of the ancient *cosmos* and the absoluteness of the Christian *God* have been assumed by *man*. That is the real significance of the word "transcendental." Man has been endowed with divine attributes. His theoretical reason is the source of the natural order, and his practical reason is the source of the moral order; this Kant calls "holy," hinting at the divine nature of reason. The cosmos has been replaced by nature as the object of science, and God has become a postulate of pure practical reason and an object of rational faith.

Hegel felt that this standpoint failed to appreciate the true relation of God to the world, overrating, as it did, the importance of man as a transcendental self. In other words, Hegel saw that the world depends not on man's self, but on God's. One might conclude from this that he saw the necessity of restoring the Christian conception of the Creator and the Creation. It cannot be denied that Hegel was partly motivated by this intention. On the other hand, he was too much a disciple of Kant and too modern in temper to return to the Christian standpoint. As a result, his whole philosophy has an ambiguous character. It pretends to be theological, but it is predominantly modern, that is, "anthropological" in the transcendental sense of the word. It is a titanic undertaking to conquer the heavenly sphere by means of human thought. The human self aims to usurp the place of deity. The philosophizing spirit itself claims to be the Logos of the Christian faith. This exaggeration marks the end of modern speculation. No wonder that after Hegel the decay began. "The owl of Minerva," which Hegel mentions in the preface of his last work, *The Philosophy of Right*, had, as he says, been launched into flight, while the night-shadows were gathering.

The object of the Hegelian quest nevertheless has survived. We must bring about a new Christian philosophy which renders unto God the things that are God's. At the same time we must preserve those insights of Kant which concern the position of man in the world, or over against the world as nature, as "objective reality." The old Christian division of nature and grace, or of world and God, must be modified. The world is, though God's Creation, nevertheless not to be identified with nature. Man is in the midst of nature and God. Though a creature, he is superior to nature and a co-operator with God. On the other hand, he himself belongs to nature and is an animal; like all creatures he depends on God. But he does not depend on God in the same way as other creatures. He is a self and, as a self, he is related to the divine mystery and has access to divine revelation. Thus he transcends "nature" by means of his reason, and the "world" by means of faith. The task of the new Christian philosophy demands a new alignment between reason and faith, or between philosophy and religion. The previous lectures have endeavored to draw the boundary line between those realms. The fundamental purpose of this undertaking, however, is not the separation of these spheres but their reunion. It is clear that this reunion must be effected on the basis of the principle of the primacy of faith over reason; not in the fashion of the scholastic thinkers, for the protestant consciousness of man must be maintained. This "protestant philosophy" has yet to be constructed. The last lectures will adduce certain suggestions in view of this need.

## CHAPTER IX

### *The Origin of Evil and Original Sin*

THE BIBLICAL account of the origin of evil is, like all religious knowledge, imaginative. It is found in the story of the fall of man.<sup>1</sup> Man, as man, is a sinner, despite his being created by God. He is a sinner not as a natural being, but by reason of his own guilt. He has fallen away from God through his free decision. Man possesses a free will; he, therefore, is not completely dependent on God as regards his selfhood. Through his selfhood, which is centered in his free will, man is akin to God; but this kinship, though emphasized previously in the story of his creation, nevertheless does not develop until the fall; through the fall man attains the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, the story of the fall discloses the tragic and paradoxical truth that man precisely by his disobedience to God attains selfhood; that he, through the loss of his innocence and original unity with God, gains his dignity as man.

Can philosophy contribute to the understanding of this obscure and perplexing account? Certainly not in the way the metaphysicians of former times have undertaken it, by offering their own speculative conceptions of the nature of man and by demonstrating that the biblical narrative

<sup>1</sup> The problem of the historical origin and of the original meaning of the story cannot of course be discussed here. The ethical meaning was probably not implied in it from the outset, but was developed in ancient times. Comp. F. R. Tennant, *The Fall Story*, 1905: "In its theological and ethical implications, which constitute the real worth of the narrative, the Fall-story has liberated itself from the qualities of primitive mythological speculation, and has transcended them. It therefore deserves to be ranked among the early attempts at theological philosophy" (p. 29).



introduces errors and is at best an imaginative presentation of the truth, set forth more adequately by their own systems. We need to be more modest, and to revere more highly the very mystery which the biblical story incorporates. This account is imaginative, not because it has not yet reached the level of conceptual explanation, but because it concerns a problem which demands an imaginative solution since no logical or ontological solution can be adequate. Just as modern aesthetics has recognized that the older conception of poetry which degraded it into a kind of lower knowledge is false, so also we must acknowledge that the imaginative language of religion cannot be replaced by any metaphysical elaboration.

Another view of imagination has been disclosed in the foregoing lectures. We have shown that spiritual imagination assumes the burden where rational thought comes to an end, and that it solves in a peculiar way the problems that cannot be solved by means of philosophical methods. Religious revelation proceeds when speculation can no longer carry on; it performs a task that cannot be performed by any other kind of knowledge. Thus religion supplements and completes the work of thought, although the means it employs seem to be more naïve and more primitive than those of logical procedure. Religion, by completing the work of thought, is in a sense *a priori* to thought; it does not carry out consciously and deliberately what reflection and speculation have begun but cannot finish by themselves. Rather, since it uses the language, not of logical definitions and conclusions, but of life and the heart, revelation does not depend on any previous development. It belongs to the very nature of the ultimate mystery that human pride, in developing the intellectual faculties for the sake of the discovery of truth, and in applying the dialectical methods of analysis and

synthesis, be humbled before it. What thought is impotent to effect—the complete penetration of immediate life and the transformation of the mystery into conceptual knowledge—this cannot be done by imagination either. But in its own way imagination reconciles thought and life as a work of art also does in its special realm. The truth at which reflection and speculation aim in vain is revealed by that kind of imaginative language which characterizes the Christian faith. The historical development of European philosophy from Greek speculation through Christian revelation to scholasticism and finally to Kant's criticism confirms the rectitude of this view.

Whereas philosophic speculation must rely on the self-reflection of the human consciousness and rise from this beginning to the concept of the ideal self, imagination, on the contrary, starts with the fact of God's creation. The picture of man, therefore, is painted within the frame of the image of the Creator and his creation. The concept of the supreme self is deduced from the concept of the never-perfected human self and, though in itself contradictory, nevertheless indicates the direction in which the solution of the highest problem must be sought. The image of God in the Bible, on the contrary, is not deduced from anything else; it stands on its own ground and becomes the matrix of the whole biblical story, while the interpretation of man follows entirely from it. (This is, by the way, the means which Hegel tries to duplicate in his system, beginning with the concept of Being as representing God in the most simple logical and ontological category, and proceeding to all other categories and through nature finally to man.) Man appears at the end of the work of creation; he is the climax of creation not only in point of time but also in the course of God's intention in creating the world. The world is not created for

its own sake but for the sake of man. It is divided into heaven, the dwelling place of God and his angels, and the earth, the abode of all other beings but especially of man, for he shall have dominion "over all the earth."

Man in the story of the fall is not characterized by being a self in a philosophic sense; nor by virtue of the consciousness that he faces the universal mystery and is, therefore, able to distinguish himself from all other things; nor by the reflection that he transcends the objective world and that he, as a transcendental self, is able to acquire an objective knowledge of nature and to submit his individual inclinations to the universal moral law. Still, all these peculiarities of man which philosophic self-reflection discloses are included in the imaginative insight that "God created man in His own image, in the image of God." Since the Bible begins with God, the Creator, it follows that man is a creator also, but on a smaller scale and restricted in many respects. The unique position of man in the creation, the difference between him and all other things, the transcendental function of his reason are illuminated by envisioning him as an image of God. His faculty of attaining objective knowledge and his mental power over all other beings are indicated by telling how God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air unto Adam "to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." Man is not only a creature like other creatures, he is at the same time akin to the Creator Himself: a transcendental self. Man is thus implicitly interpreted by reference to his peculiar relation to the universal mystery. But this reference is not made in these terms, since the ultimate is revealed from the outset as God the Creator. The Bible assumes that man understands the word "God" out of himself, for Genesis does not refer to

any definite instruction given by God in this regard. God does not Himself address man, yet the narrative sets out with the words: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth."

Since the ultimate mystery is revealed as God, the evil inherent in the mystery of man can be interpreted as having its source in man's disobedience to the commandment of the Creator. Moral evil appears thus as sin, for sin is no longer the negation of man's own self by his own will and action, it is rather the negation of God's will by man. Man's moral failure is no longer the self-perversion and self-contradiction of his will; sin is a revolt against God. Self-contradiction resolves into a separation of man from God. Man declares himself independent, the master of himself, a lord over what he pleases to do or not to do. He separates himself from his divine master and lord. Of course, the self-contradiction of the evil will does not disappear in this religious interpretation of it; it is contained in man's disobedience to God, since the will of God, as the perfectly good will, is man's own moral will in the state of perfection. It is precisely this truth which man discovers from the fall, for he learns thereby the difference between good and evil, and he learns that he failed to do the good when he ate the fruit and disobeyed. Experiencing the meaning of good and evil, he experiences his own moral self. This element in the story is its profoundest feature; it reveals the mystery of man. Man, at the same time, falls and rises. He falls away from the immediate unity with God and he rises to a new relation to Him by attaining moral consciousness. Only through the fall can man acquire this new likeness to God. This insight has been completely neglected by the dogma of original sin as the source of man's corruption. There is a "semi-pelagian" element in the very story of the fall!

Man's situation with respect to good and evil is connected with the problem of the relation between mystical intuition and moral reason; this is solved in the peculiar form of religious imagination. By virtue of his intuition man embraces the mystical unity of all things. The paradise is the imaginative idea which corresponds to the original concord between God, world (or nature), and man. To be sure, mystical intuition is silent, and needs elaboration by means of imagination to be articulated and "revealed." This is the burden of the biblical narrative. The image of paradise conforms to the image of the world as the Creation of God. The world created by God is true and good; there is no room for error and sin, there is no division between man's existence and man's essence, between what he is and what he ought to be, between his real and his ideal self. Indeed, there is not yet any *self* at all! Mystical intuition does not differentiate and discriminate between things and the self of man. As long as man lives in the paradise of this intuition he faces no problem: problems are first raised by the radical split in man's consciousness. This split originates in the duality of intuition and reflection. In the state of paradise, this duality is not yet overt or actual; intuition is predominant. Or, in other words, the overwhelming sight of the ultimate mystery still covers and checks reflection on the nature of man. Man's intellect is confined to the intuitive knowledge of things and beings around him, and this knowledge is wrapped in the mystery of God. He still sees all things in God. He is in a state of innocence.

From the standpoint of philosophy this mystery is a mystery only as contrasted with the non-mystical consciousness in which reason prevails. The opposition between mystical intuition and the claim of reason generates the metaphysical problems which lead to antinomies.

From the standpoint of religious imagination the antinomies are solved by the revealed interpretation of the ultimate mystery. How does religious imagination proceed from the original unity to the status of division, from mystical intuition to intellectual reflection? Or in other words: how can religious imagination leave the standpoint from which the divine mystery is not yet problematic, for a standpoint from which the problem of man appears? This transition is made in the story of the fall. The fall is the awakening of man's self-consciousness. Adam discovers that he is naked. This discovery represents the act of self-separation of man from nature, on the one hand, and from God, on the other. Both are one and the same awakening. Man becomes man by removing himself from nature and from God. By means of this withdrawal he becomes the peculiar being that is subjugated to the sway of nature, yet, nevertheless, can cooperate with God. The Creation of man is not finished until man himself acquires self-consciousness. By behaving as he does in the story man participates in his own spiritual formation. This cooperation with God in His creation, which means at the same time man's revolt against God, is necessary to culminate the Creation of man. The problem of man is thus raised in an imaginative way. And from this problem at once stem all other metaphysical problems.

Religious imagination is not involved in these metaphysical problems. It does not formulate antinomies. Instead, it speaks of conflicts in life. Man suffers as a result of his trespassing. He is driven out of paradise. He has to take over responsibility for himself. He has to work in order to live. Death threatens him. Sorrow accompanies him. His life is no longer peaceful nor protected by God. The mystery is no longer preserved in the

form of the undisturbed unity of God and man. It has resolved itself into the mystery of man's self, divided against itself and separated from God. This state has been provoked by man himself and has been brought about by disobedience to his Creator. Philosophic reflection and religious imagination meet at this point. The biblical interpretation of man agrees with man's self-reflection, though their languages are different. While the Bible speaks of the conflict between man and God, self-reflection speaks of the antinomy in man's own consciousness, originating from his duality, which in turn is generated by man's intuition of the universal mystery and the moral duty to respond to the infinite good. The Bible proceeds from the image of the Creator to the disobedience of man; in other words from the mystery of God to the mystery of man, while self-reflection takes the opposite course. The story of the fall translates the antinomy of the human self into the language of imagination so that it comes to the fore as the conflict between man and God.

At first sight, it appears that man alone initiates the break between God and himself; it is not the mystery of God, but that of man, which is expressed by the story. But there are two minor points which indicate that the fall occurs only because a latent tension between God and man becomes overt. The final outbreak of the conflict is anticipated by two forebodings. The first is the warning not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The existence of this tree in the garden of paradise demonstrates that God and man are not fully united, that man is not yet created in the image of God; that, on the contrary, the peculiar feature of man, his participation in the knowledge of God concerning the difference between good and evil, is not yet accomplished. Since God warns

man not to attain this knowledge by eating the fruit, an unrevealed mystery remains in the image of the Creator. On the other hand, man seems to long for this knowledge; curiosity seems to be his first sin, although this sin is ambiguous, since curiosity may be interpreted as thirst for knowledge, by no means evil in itself. Perhaps the story suggests that thirst for knowledge can become sinful when it exceeds a certain limit. Thus it has been said that the inquiry into the origin of evil is the original evil itself. In any case the warning adumbrates the future conflict and is the first sign of it on the part of God. God knows that man, though created in His image, is nevertheless not His equal. God alone knows the difference between good and evil without having experienced sin.

The second point concerns man's temptation by the serpent. Again, this occurrence suggests that man alone is not the initiator of his fall. The serpent represents a power not human but inferior to man, nevertheless superior to him in so far as it knows the difference between good and evil and acts upon this knowledge in seducing man. The serpent indicates that paradise conceals a demon. This fact emphasizes the mysterious character of the Creation and the Creator, and it mitigates the guilt of man without diminishing his responsibility. Taken together with the suggested thirst for knowledge it confers a tragic character upon the image of man. The antinomies which bar the way to the knowledge of God as the existent ideal self are—as far as they have an ontological root—to be traced to the cardinal opposition of Being and Not-Being. This Not-Being, which is indispensable even in the theological statement that God has created the world out of nothing, emerges in the demon of the serpent. The ideal self cannot appear in the imaginative form of the Creator without being accompanied by this



demon, the origin of which is not disclosed in the story, and has produced all the legendary explanations which culminate in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The imaginative solution of the antinomies is not yet complete; it cannot be complete until the demon and the consequences of his deed are defeated and abolished. And this cannot ensue save by the salvation of man. This salvation, therefore, is the necessary completion of the solution of the antinomies accomplished by religious revelation. "Necessity" means, to be sure, not an ontological or a metaphysical consequence, if the logic of imagination and faith concerning the moral fate of man is to be adopted. The transformation of ontological and metaphysical problems into moral conflicts and the moral solution of those conflicts is the peculiar performance of religious imagination. Of course, this transformation is not the intention of the Bible; it is a meaning to be discovered by the thinker in striving to understand the revealed image of man.

The two items mentioned touch other problems connected with the problem of evil; and they show that the spiritual imagination of the Bible "solves" antinomies which encumber the concept of man. The *warning* deals with the dialectical relation of knowledge and will; the *temptation* with the dialectical relation between causality and freedom of the will. Both problems must be considered in connection with the respective solutions given in the story; then we are prepared to understand and appreciate rightly the philosophic meaning of this profound doctrine of man. There is a strange tension between *knowledge* and *will* in respect to the origin of evil. Both knowledge and will claim primacy over each other. Greek and Thomistic philosophy stressed the primacy of the intellect over the will, whereas the biblical interpretation of man and modern philosophy stress the decision of the

will as the primary source of evil. It is obvious that these aspects of the human spirit are connected. The question is, which predominates? Man cannot commit sin without knowing the difference between good and evil. But sin is not the consequence of wrong insight or error, it is not based on a false concept of the good, rather it is the consequence of a wrong will, it is a transgression against a commandment of the good or of God, which is known, and acknowledged as such. Sin is a revolt. Therefore, this knowledge cannot be acquired in a theoretical way only. A will that has never succumbed to any temptation cannot know what moral evil means. This knowledge cannot be acquired except by a bad conscience, or, as Kierkegaard calls it in Existential language, by individual experience. In conscience alone is revealed the knowledge of good and evil, since this knowledge is not a mathematical axiom to be attained by means of theoretical judgment or apprehension but by the straying will alone. Our conscience is, in contrast to science, the source of this knowledge of the will.

To be sure, there is also a warning prior to the action of the will and to the knowledge of evil attained by the reaction of the bad conscience. But one cannot hear this warning voice until one has become acquainted with the judicial power that has condemned some previous act of the will. An angel, who has never yielded to temptation, nay, who has never felt any lure, cannot understand the meaning of the word "sin." It is, therefore, incomprehensible to us how God understands it; and the Gospel cautions that this understanding transcends all human limits, otherwise Jesus would not have behaved toward sinners as he did. *The mystery of God includes the mystery of sin.* This mystery shows its power in the antinomies we encounter in trying to think it out. One of these antin-

omies concerns the relation between knowledge and will in the origin of sin. I must *know* what is evil before I can trespass against my better judgment. Some evil thing must lure me, although I know it is evil. On the other hand, evil *willing* must precede this knowledge; only a bad conscience or a punishment felt as punishment can enlighten me about the meaning of evil. How can this meaning appear in the mind? If I do not know anything about good and evil, *before* I act, I cannot suffer a bad conscience, and I cannot understand the moral meaning of punishment. On the other hand, I cannot learn this meaning *without* experience. There is no other alternative: evil must be in our breast before we actually commit any specific sin. But this necessity appears to contradict the voice of conscience, since I cannot accuse and condemn myself on account of a moral deficiency that is not generated by my will. *The antinomy of knowledge and will* expands to the antinomy of responsibility and fate, or of individual, personal freedom in committing sin and a general sinfulness imposed on a man as a specimen of the genus man.

The biblical story answers the first antinomy by introducing the warning before the temptation, the second by executing the temptation through the mouth of the serpent. To be sure, the warning is hardly to be interpreted as a moral prohibition as long as man lacks the knowledge of good and evil (as he does before the fall). But the logic of imagination does not take offense at this difficulty; the story has the function of solving the antinomies by means, not of dialectical distinctions, but, on the contrary, of imaginative suggestions which deny the character of the distinctions. The logic of thought must conclude that there is only the following alternative: either man understands the meaning of the prohibition, in which case he does not attain the knowledge of good and evil by

the fall; or he attains this knowledge by the fall, in which case he cannot understand the moral meaning of the warning, and accordingly he does not commit sin at all. But this is not the logic of faith. The story does not veil the mysterious character of the origin of sin; on the contrary, it emphasizes this character. The report of the seven days' work of God has a legendary appearance; the picture of paradise permits no doubt that this marvelous scene images a mystery; and so does the miraculous serpent. But behind those mysterious and legendary features looms a profound truth; our logical separations and definitions break down before the ultimate mystery.

Warning and temptation suggest that despite man's own responsibility in committing the first sin a certain potentiality of sin in man must be admitted; that there is a cosmological or ontological origin of sin in addition to man's own act. Before the actual sin is committed and even before it could be committed logically (i.e., in accordance with the logic of moral experience) sin already had a potential existence exhibited by the existence of the tree and the proclamation of the prohibition, on the one hand, and by the existence of the serpent and its seductive words, on the other hand. Sin originates not from man's rational will, not from man's will alone, but is inherent in the ultimate mystery. The story images this truth, and embodies it in the profoundest manner. No wonder this story has captured the imagination of the European world, and has stimulated innumerable hearts and inspired innumerable works of fine art, and of poetry. Moreover, the revelation of the mystery of sin hints at the possibility of man's salvation by divine action. If there is a potential origin of evil before the actual sin has been committed by man, man is not as devilish as the devil. *He does not really will the evil*; he succumbs to it. The fall is

not only a *moral*, it is a *tragic* event. And a tragic event can be expiated. Genesis is the first act of a cosmic drama in which God and man are first estranged and finally reconciled—the death and Resurrection of Christ are the last act in the drama whose first act is Genesis.

The narrative of the temptation by the serpent concerns the antinomy of freedom and fate. The possibility of evil, as the potential ability of the will to do evil is its liability to yield. Vulnerability to temptation is the stimulus to evil action, a stimulus which does not exist outside myself and enter into me from without, but which I myself implant in myself. The metaphysical possibility of evil nevertheless exists, so to speak, outside my will, and it is this possibility which is represented by the voice of the serpent. The temptation, to be sure, becomes a temptation only because I listen to its voice; nevertheless its impact comes from without. The temptations to which I am prone are always concrete situations, and of those situations both the tempting object and my own self are parts. How far the self can resist—that is, how far it can resist being led astray—cannot in general be determined; and so my liability to fall is at all times my fault, even though I think the frontiers of self-control ever so well fortified. But I could not be tempted at all, if I did not previously commit a transgression which taught me what a temptation is or means. I could not sin if I had not already sinned. Sin presupposes sin, as Kierkegaard says, insisting on the dialectical character of sin. My will makes manifest the metaphysical possibility of evil in the capacity to be tempted and in real temptation. I am tempted by my own will in so far as the will departs from the straight path leading to the good. But my will cannot be tempted if it does not know the meaning of temptation; it can be affected by desires or urges, but those motives

become temptations only after I have learned what a transgression is, and I cannot learn this until I have experienced it.

Thus the origin of moral evil in the course of time appears inexplicable and self-contradictory. That is the reason why the scriptural narrative introduces the serpent which represents, as it were, the demon of temptation in the breast of man. Because the biblical writer felt the difficulty of any explanation, he rightly had recourse to the imaginative idea of the devil. Of course, this recourse does not offer a metaphysical solution, but it affords a religious solution—the only possible one. The imaginative idea of the devil is the idea of a being that wills evil for evil's sake, which man never does. A being that wills evil need not first be tempted. His will is evil by its nature. He is the very idea of evil incarnate or personified.

Sin presupposes sin. On the other hand, sin is a phenomenon happening in time, and thus it must begin at some time, last for a time, and end in time. If, however, every sin presupposes *a priori* sin, then this phenomenon is as inexplicable and incomprehensible as time itself or as the beginning of the world in time. Indeed, sin belongs to that realm of things which involve reason in unavoidable antinomies. Evil cannot be derived save from evil itself; therefore Scripture introduces the devil as personified evil. Evil cannot be derived, but it can be traced to an original discord in which all divisions within the human self and the opposition of self and world must originate. Evil springs from the same source from which spring man's selfhood, will, and freedom. *There is no possible transition from the beast to man, from nature to self-consciousness, however small we reduce the steps from the one state to the other; there is a sudden leap or break,*

if we try to describe the original separation as a temporal act (which we are not entitled to do).

Verily we cannot think of our being tempted and our knowing the difference between good and evil as two stages following each other in time. Temptation and knowledge arise together. I can only know good and evil by knowing them in myself; and this knowledge can only come to me through my own good and evil action; therefore evil action and knowledge of my temptability and sinfulness is indispensable for moral consciousness. So, the eating of the fruit is indeed the decisive feature. In committing sin man awakes to selfhood, to manhood, to freedom. *He awakes to freedom only by misusing it.* In order to know freedom's true and right use the will must disturb the unconscious paradisiacal harmony between nature and man, and between him and God. This disruption is at the same time a particular sin and the birth of all sin. It is the *original sin*. Not pride and not curiosity, no special vice at all is the source of the first sinful act, but the destruction by man's self-dependent will of the original unity of man, nature, and God as imaged in paradise. In a way one could call this destruction an act of pride on the part of man; but this metaphysical pride is the very precondition of man's moral freedom and autonomy. *Original sin and the origin of man's selfhood cannot be separated.* This is the mystery of man, and this mystery is revealed through imagination in the narrative of the fall.

The narrative reveals still another mystery that can be formulated in the antinomy of individuality. Man is an individual, not in the same manner as other entities or things are individuals; he is what he ought to be, an infinite potentiality which cannot be conceived of in terms of any genus or species, indeed in any logical terms whatever. Therefore man's moral decisions cannot be antici-

pated by any theoretical concept of the nature of man. Man has no nature, so to speak, from a metaphysical point of view; he has a nature only from a physical or psychological point of view. His metaphysical aspect is at the same time his moral aspect. Man is free and responsible. He can be free and responsible not as man in *general*, but only as an *individual* that acts with the consciousness of freedom and responsibility. Man *is* not free; individuals may act without any freedom at all. But in this case they act without moral dignity and responsibility. Man may so act. Therefore every single human act decides anew the "nature" of man. Man has to demonstrate by his own decision and action what he is. No law, in the sense of a necessitating power or a determinating general rule, no type or concept can determine what man is; not man in general, but every individual man must answer this question on his own behalf, by his own decision and conduct. Man can, as Pico della Mirandola says, sink to the level of the beasts, and he can rise to the level of the angels and of God. His potentiality is not prescribed by any positive law or rule.

If that be true, then every theory, doctrine, or dogma which asserts man's sinfulness as a general mark of all individuals of the genus "man" must be wrong. The individual, with respect to his moral worth, is the process of his self-actualization; every individual decides, by his own willing and acting, the very issues which the doctrine or the dogma of the human sinfulness pretends to settle by way of a general theory.

But, on the other hand, no one can deny that every man has Adam in him; that no man can go through his life without being tempted and without succumbing; that no man, as long as he is man, can be exempted from the reproach of being frail and prone to yield; that nobody can



fulfill the commandment of Jesus: "Be ye perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect," throughout his life. This antinomy is akin to that of freedom and fatality, but not identical, since the opposition between the individual and the genus "man" concerns not only the relation of the individual to a necessitating law, but also his relation to his fellow men, to the whole family of men as the race grows and increases from generation to generation. All men are akin to one another, and this kinship means a certain likeness, certain ties and bonds, spun and woven by education, tradition, common inclinations, interests, and so on, in spite of all the differences between individuals, nations, and epochs. A certain solidarity welds all men into one.

This solidarity is stressed in the Genesis story which declares the common descent of all men from one and the same parent. And this common descent, this solidarity and equality of all men, limits the possibilities open to the individual and confines him to the conditions of human existence. Adam is, from this point of view, not an individual but man as such, and his fall entails *the tragic guilt of all his descendants*, or the guilt which nobody can escape who descends from him. The doctrine of original sin, as Augustine worked it out, shows the antinomies hidden in the relation of the individual to the family of men. The biblical story, however, is no logical doctrine. It is not encumbered by those antinomies because it manifests the mystical character of man. Man is a being replete with contradiction; but this is not amazing since reality, as such, is full of contradiction. Revelation does not conceal this fact, nor does it develop it in logical fashion. Instead the Bible achieves its grandeur, its beauty and truth by depicting images which contain the mystery in the entire scope of its profundity.

Individual guilt is imaged in the fall of Adam; the solidarity of all his descendants in the curse which has befallen the whole genus. No individual dwells in the paradise after the expulsion of Adam. Although Adam alone has committed the sin, all are guilty with him, for everyone commits the same sin on his own account and in his peculiar manner. Thought separates individuality and generality or universality, but the immediacy of life contains both elements in an undivided original unity. To be sure, in life, too, conflicts arise out of hidden oppositions, and these conflicts urge the thinking mind to philosophize. But even the most advanced speculation cannot solve the antinomies formulated by rational thought; on the contrary, the more advanced, the more acute and refined the speculation, the more obvious and pressing appear the contradictions. Reason ultimately must resign; but this does not mean an "agnosticism" as the standpoint of Kant has often been understood to imply. It does not mean that our philosophy ends in scepticism. On the contrary, it ends in faith. And just because it ends in faith, reason must resign and must yield to imagination. Man is advised by reason to return to the paradise of spirit. We must "become as little children." Only by advancing toward the childhood of spirit can we find the solution of ultimate problems.

Revelation shows that the severest conflict in life is caused by sin, and that sin is, though the best-known fact in life, nevertheless the most problematic. Revelation envisages this mystical character of sin as a conflict between man and God, the Creator. If sin had not this mystical character, no salvation or redemption would have been possible. If man transgressed without any warning from God and without any temptation from the devil, his guilt could not be forgiven; there would be no way back to the

original unity of God, world, and man. Man would be completely isolated; even the community between him and his fellow-men could not soften his conscience and mitigate his guilt. Man, detached from the consciousness of the universal mystery and delivered up to the tribunal of moral judgment without an advocate, is obliged to despair, provided he does not deceive himself by evading the judge within, not solving the conflict thereby but rending himself all the more. The bare consciousness of the ultimate mystery cannot acquit him, for it is silent as long as it remains an intuition without spiritual interpretation. Mystical intuition alone cannot reconcile man with his own conscience nor with the reality and life that enmeshes him. Revelation must intervene. It cannot restore the original unity destroyed by sin. The Christian religion has stressed this truth in deepening man's conscience and sense of sin. Christianity is a moral religion; the Creator is a moral God. Not man's happiness is the purpose of God's creation, but man's reconciliation with God. And this reconciliation is not brought about through a theodicy, since God cannot be accused, but in the form of an anthropodicy, for man needs be accused. The final act of the tragic drama of man, therefore, is the crucifixion of Him who had come among men to acquit man.

## CHAPTER X

### *The Primacy of Faith*

THE RELATION between faith and knowledge changed when the Christian religion began its conquest of the souls of men. Whereas the pagan creeds were based on a type of religious imagination inferior to the philosophic thought of the time, represented by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the Christian creed, on the contrary, was rooted in an imagination superior to all speculation. We can express this difference by stressing that pagan religions were products of imagination alone, while the Christian religion embodies truth revealed by God Himself. But when we accept this distinction, it must not be forgotten that the Christian religion also is imaginative, just because it is a religion and not a metaphysical system.

The striking fact is that truth, as revealed by the Christian religion, cannot be ascertained by means of rational thought nor expressed in a speculative form; it transcends the sphere of thought and speculation in two directions. First, it overcomes the antinomies which bar the approach to ultimate truth; and, secondly, it seals the cleft between thought and life, between the mediated sphere of concepts and the immediacy of experience, between essence and existence. Faith is "Existential" as knowledge never can be without denying its own nature and intention. To be sure, this quality is not exclusive to the Christian religion; it characterizes all religions. But the particular excellence of the Christian religion derives from the content of its images, or, in other words, from

the truth of its images. But have images any truth at all? And if they have truth, how can we know that they have? And what is the meaning of the word "truth" when applied to the products of imagination? What is the meaning of "truth" when applied to faith, supposing that faith cannot be transformed into knowledge? Is it permissible to speak of such a truth, if there is no criterion of it save personal reports which may easily be explained as inventions or dismissed as hallucinations and illusion?

To raise the question of the truth of faith opens a large field of problems, and we cannot deal with all of these in this final lecture. I must confine myself to such considerations concerning the relation of faith and knowledge as issue from the former lectures. At the outset it must be remembered that the truth of faith, if any there be, cannot be the truth of objective knowledge, not even of such objective knowledge as may transcend the possibilities of our attaining it. God does not belong to the objective world or to any world which can be made the object of objective knowledge. Therefore the substance of faith must be excluded from the realm of objective knowledge, being related to God.

God cannot be an object; the human self does not belong to the world of objects, in so far as it is a self. Thus it follows that, if there be any truth in faith, reports and facts which belong only to this world could not possibly be taken as a criterion of it. The truth about such facts is nowise relevant to faith. All religious knowledge is of the same kind as the knowledge of God as Creator. The very suggestion that the truth of this knowledge could be tested by objective methods is absurd on its face, and no refutation is needed.

We have further seen that not only is objective knowledge helpless and powerless when confronted with the

"object" of religious knowledge, but that even philosophic speculation cannot extend to the sphere of religion. Natural theology, indeed, can and must show that the problem of Being and all ontological problems lead to a conceptual idea corresponding to that of God; and especially that the concept of the ideal self is the necessary condition of all knowledge and the necessary goal of all human striving. But, on the other hand, we are obliged to acknowledge too that this concept is encumbered with inescapable and insoluble antinomies, and, moreover, that this concept is by no means identical with the image of the living God. It remains a concept whereas God, though conceived by revealing imagination and not otherwise conceivable, is an existing being, addressing man, and involved in the actuality of man's life in a definite way. To be sure, we have been able to recognize that spiritual imagination corresponds to certain speculative problems and moral experiences. But can we conclude from this that the revealed God is the only true God, that the Christian imagination alone is the source of truth?

There is one objection, raised over and over again, even in the Bible itself, namely the objection lodged in the existence of evil, especially moral evil, in the world created by God despite His alleged goodness, omnipotence and omniscience. Indeed, one need not be endowed with unusual sagacity to raise this objection. Every hour of life cries out the same protest. The assurance of the Bible seems foolish or fantastic at these moments. How can we maintain belief in the perfect goodness of almighty God and be sincere about it? We may grant that belief, in the sense of an irrational or even anti-rational credulity influenced by the wishes of the human heart, may be generated by the story of the Creation. But a mature and critical intellect could scarcely cling to it. Strange that in

spite of the obviousness of this statement, so many thinking and even learned people have maintained this belief through many centuries, and that even in this sceptical age the belief has not become completely extinct. Still these considerations are superficial and do not reach the heart of the question which is the heart of life. The Bible makes no effort to conceal the mysterious character of God and His world; on the contrary it stresses this character at every turn. Were truth revealed by God not mysterious, the Bible would hardly insist on the contrast of divine revelation and human wisdom.

The world, as the Creation of God, is a mysterious world, indeed it is the familiar world looked at with the eyes of mystical intuition. The Bible emphasizes the mysterious character of Creation by depicting the first state of the world as a paradise, and averring that all evils emerged with the fall of man. Indeed, the awakening of man's self-consciousness is the origin, not only of his knowledge of good and evil, but also of all evils, for *the very meaning of evil presupposes the standard of the moral values*. The brute animals surely suffer as much as man; although their sufferings are only bodily, still they must be called evils. But the brute does not know the concept of evil, not possessing a moral consciousness and self-consciousness. Man in paradise was "beyond good and evil" in every respect. The fall gave rise to evil, not only in the specific sense of moral frailty and wickedness, but in the general sense too. Original sin, from which springs the origin of the human self, and the separation of God, world and man, recasts the whole creation, transforming it into that world wherein we now live.

Not God alone, but also man, has thus a part in the Creation. The mystery of God and the mystery of man cannot be separated if our belief in God is a belief in the

God of revelation. It is clear that an omnipotent, omniscient, and holy Supreme Being who is not mysterious (like the God of the deists) is incompatible with the tragic fate of man and with the gloomy panorama of human history. The age of the Enlightenment, therefore, was forced to sustain an optimistic view of human existence, and the deistic creed broke down when this optimism was disappointed. The Christian creed is not optimistic at all, in spite of its affirmation that God created the world. And it is also clear that no ontological, cosmological, or other rational proof of the existence of such a mysterious God can ever be perfected.

On the other hand, we cannot believe in the Creator and in all His deeds and words on the sole ground that God has revealed Himself in Scripture, as the Barthians demand, for how can we know that God has really revealed Himself in Scripture before we believe in Him? The Catholics can base this belief on the existence of the church; they are obliged to accept first the holiness of the church they believe in as the truth of revelation. The belief in the holiness of the Catholic church, however, can be based on no authority save itself; it is the unconditional precondition of the whole Catholic faith. The Protestant cannot deduce his faith from an equally neat premise. He must trust his own judgment to a great extent. To be sure, he believes that his own judgment regarding the truth of revelation is not only his own; he believes that his faith itself originates with God. But in order to believe in the divine origin of his faith he must first believe in God, and this belief cannot be assured through any prior belief.

This is a necessary antinomy which illuminates the paradox of revelation as the word of God, written by man and handed down by the inspired authors to posterity. This paradox is linked with the mystery that veils the



relation between God and man—the central mystery of the whole Christian religion. Belief in the living God is not entirely to be detached from man's own experience and judgment. Otherwise God could be an omnipotent and omniscient demon or tyrant instead of being perfectly good and holy. We believe in the holy God because we are moral beings who believe in moral goodness and in the goal of perfection. This belief is not based on biblical revelation, rather our belief in biblical revelation is based on the presumption that God who reveals Himself corresponds with the idea of perfect goodness. This idea is not revealed, it is *an idea of moral reason*. The Bible itself teaches that man knows good and evil after the fall, and that man is akin to God in this respect. As Protestants we believe in the Creator because He has revealed Himself in the biblical story of His creation; but we could not believe in Him if we did not believe that He who has revealed Himself is infinitely good and, therefore, the true God. *Thus a link is found between natural theology and revealed theology, mediated by faith.* In other words: the Bible is the Bible not because the church or any other authority decrees that it is a holy book and to be revered, but because we, as moral beings, are convinced that the spirit which reveals itself in this book is really holy and divine. The biblical God answers our moral ideas, otherwise we would be compelled to abandon our faith.

We are not mere containers, into which the oil of faith has been poured to the end that belief in the content of that faith may be kindled from without, as some theologians have taught. We are thinking and willing and feeling beings who possess a mystical intuition, and as such beings we believe in God. The fall of man, the ensuing loss of paradise, and the condition of our life on

earth are instances which might cause us to succumb to doubts about the existence of the Creator (as they really do over and over again), if a way were not opened, leading back to paradise or to the original unity of God and man. *The cardinal content of revelation concerns this way.* It is a long journey, leading through many stages in the development of revelation and of the relation between God and man, until at last Jesus appears and announces that the final stage is at hand, and that God intends bringing about a complete reconciliation between Himself and man through the mediation of His son.

During the development of revelation, an important change occurs in the image of God. God, the Creator, becomes God, the Redeemer. The idea of redemption or salvation also alters the character of faith itself. Faith in God, the Creator, concerns the *world* and man in the world; faith in God the Redeemer deals with *man* alone. The Creator is a being beyond the world and, therefore, beyond man; the Redeemer is no longer a purely transcendent being, He has His existence nowhere but in the soul of man; He is the inward God. All the words of Jesus point to this change. The mystery He reveals is the unity of God and man! This unity was destroyed by the fall; it is repeatedly destroyed through sin. Sin is the barrier between God and man. If sin can be removed and annihilated then the barrier must vanish and the original unity must be restored. The Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims the restoration of that unity by means of remission of sin. Jesus fulfills the law because through him the transcendent God who has expelled man from paradise and has sent him into the exile of this tragic life on earth, descends from His throne and enters the soul of man.

This is the greatest of all miracles and all lesser mira-

cles are but symbols of this mystic deed. It is mystical not because it violates the laws of nature, but because it interprets the mystical intuition of man, as, in fact, does the whole of revelation. It is a miracle, not because God is a magician or exerts some witchery, but because His act transforms the innermost substance of man, his very self. Whereas this self is a self only because it strives after the infinite good without being able to reach it, now this infinite good itself appears in the selfhood of Jesus and proclaims that faith can accomplish what man of his own will never can.

Although this new turn is brought about by the man Jesus, nevertheless it is the logical consequence of the revelatory development, conceding that there is a kind of logic in religious imagination. If it be true that God, the infinite Good, imaged as a personal being, has created the world and man, and if it be true that man is man in the sense of a responsible and self-dependent self through his own guilt, but not without a mysterious fate that is not the work of his will and, therefore, not his own fault, then it is logical that God has the power to receive again and restore man, if he repents of his sin, and that God in this way re-establishes the original peace in him, the "peace of God." The meaning of moral evil, inherent in the story of the fall, prepares the mind for this final revelation, and the work of salvation simply draws the conclusion implicit in that story from the start.

Sin is not only *guilt*, it is *fate* also and, therefore tragic. Man expiates the guilt by sorrow, pain, and conflict with his fellows, all descendants of Adam. But since sin is not only a *moral* phenomenon, a self-negation of man's own self and thus a self-contradiction, but at the same time a *metaphysical* phenomenon and, as such, interpreted by spiritual imagination as man's disobedience to

God after the serpent has tempted him, salvation issues as its logical conclusion. Of course, we are in the sphere of mystery and of revealing imagination and we are, therefore, constrained not to speak of logical consequences as if pretending to demonstrate by means of speculation what faith alone can make clear. But faith has its own logic, the *logic of heart* as Pascal has called it. This logic begins where speculation ends; it perfects speculation in the direction postulated by moral reason and reflection. This is the peculiar and unique excellence of the Christian faith.

The fall of man is a tragic guilt, that is, a guilt which not only has moral motives but is rooted in the mystery of man. The antinomies concerning sin originate in this mystical root. The Gospel of man's salvation, therefore, is the final solution of those antinomies. If there were not a logical necessity in the work of salvation, men could never have understood it and believed in it. This understanding was made possible by the imaginative interpretation of God and sin as transmitted in a living faith through the whole development of religious experience down to Jesus. Jesus could not have come before this stage of the development was reached; and he could not have preached his Gospel if the whole development had not prepared the way for this final solution.

But despite this inner logic of development and its climax, no logical method, no speculative argument or proof could have achieved the same result. The real, that is, the living, performance of all deeds and words, of the sufferings and the tragic end of Jesus were necessary to bring about the religious "knowledge" of salvation. This knowledge is, therefore, not comparable to knowledge which can be found and taught by the intellect alone. It is rather comparable to that kind of knowledge which

man learns by his own experience, and which equips him with personal skill and wisdom in dealing with the problems and difficulties of his career. Religious knowledge is such wisdom; it is not to be acquired by one's isolated experience as an individual but, in addition, must be amplified by prophets and expanded by social intercourse. Knowledge of this kind requires a continuous tradition and must undergo inner growth, such as took place in the history of the chosen people from the oldest times to Jesus.

Jesus revealed the inward God, but at the same time he did not break the line of tradition; he did not abolish belief in the Creator God. On the contrary, his mission had an inner consistency exactly because he kept this belief and revealed that the Creator God Himself dwells inwardly in man. Jesus transferred the religious center of gravity from the cosmological to the self-reflective sphere—a revolution which has an analogy in the philosophic turn brought about by Kant's transcendental subjectivism. Indeed, these revolutions are not only akin to each other, but it is fair to maintain that Kant was the first thinker to draw from the *Christian* faith its ultimate conclusions in the ontological and epistemological realm. Whereas all philosophy before Kant retained the *Greek* conception of the primacy of the cosmological standpoint even in the field of theological speculation, Kant rejected this view. His doctrine of the transcendental self as the highest condition of the objective world is a late philosophic effect of the religious revolution brought about by the spiritual imagination of Jesus and Paul.

Although Athanasius had previously stressed the soteriological significance of Christ over against the Greek doctrine of the Logos,<sup>1</sup> the authority of Augustine was

<sup>1</sup> Comp. v. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, § 36.

too strong to permit medieval scholasticism to abandon its Platonic and later its Aristotelian inheritance. Even in Kant himself the full significance of the inward direction of the Christian faith did not find complete acknowledgment and harmonious philosophic adjustment. To be sure, no philosophic conception can adapt itself to the truth revealed by the Gospel except by reflection on the boundary line between philosophy and religion, and the frank admission of the unique and primary role of faith based upon a holy imagination. Failure to recognize this occasioned Kant's doctrine of rational faith and Hegel's attempt to renew the doctrine of the Logos from the transcendental standpoint.

The reconciliation of God and man integrates the Creation, because it reconstrues the divinity of the work of God. Man disturbs and destroys this divinity by his sin, and he cannot restore the original harmony and moral purity by his own will and resources. Not the self of man, but the self of God alone, has the power of remission and of salvation. Thus, not the Creator, but the Redeemer, reveals the innermost substance of God. Not until the redemption is the image of God adequate to the concept of the ideal self disengaged from the antinomies; therefore not until the redemption is the mystery of God fully revealed. The ontological and cosmological antinomies, to be sure, are already overcome in the image of the Creator; otherwise this image could not represent God as an existing and acting being. But the ethical and anthropological antinomies make their appearance with the fall of man. And these antinomies repeat the ontological and cosmological ones since they concern God as well as man, dealing with the discord between them. Those antinomies, seemingly solved in the image of the Creator, burst out again on the level of the conflict between God and

man. It is not only the mystery of man, it is the mystery of God at the same time which manifests itself in this discord. It is (translated into the language of speculation) the *ontological* antinomy between being and not-being, unity and disunity which re-appears in the story of the fall. It appears, not in the form of the ontological, but in that of a *moral* antinomy, of a *contradiction in man's own heart and conscience*, as an "Existential" conflict.

The solution of this conflict in the redemption of man brings about the final victory of good over evil, and consequently of being over not-being, of unity over disunity. In the image of the divine love, as paternally forgiving, boundless, and pouring out grace upon the sinner, is the highest stage of God's self-revelation attained. Only herein does Being win full supremacy over everything negative; the image of the divine omnipotence reaches its summit. Redemption is the only possible form of a "theodicy." It is not God who stands in need of justification, it is man. On the other hand, if man can be justified by the power of the divine love, the antinomy between a divine Creation and a wicked world is solved. This solution is no explanation. The mystery of God cannot be explained, it can explain nothing. Otherwise it would cease to be a mystery and become the content of an idea. God would cease to be God. The solution offered by the Gospel performs more than any rational system could possibly perform. *It transforms the soul of man.* It is a power in the immediacy of life. No knowledge whatsoever, but faith alone, can bring about such a living solution of the metaphysical problems; and in turn only such a solution is adapted to those problems, because they concern the reality of life, and not a theoretical interest isolated from the actuality of our consciousness and our conscience.

Kant was on the right scent when he proclaimed the primacy of the practical over the theoretical reason. But he did not follow the trail to the end; he did not proclaim the primacy of revealing imagination and of faith based on this imagination. He did not see that the only standpoint from which we can believe in God is the standpoint of the living faith which cannot be postulated by reason, reasonable though it be. Faith cannot be regarded as a poor substitute for the inaccessible knowledge of God; it is the only legitimate approach to the living God for He is an object of knowledge only in so far as He is an object of devotion at the same time.

There is a speculative temptation to conclude that God, by redeeming sinful man, actually redeems Himself, since it is pure Being that frees itself from its own inherent contradiction (to be restricted, that is, partially not to be) in the act of redemption, thereby overcoming within itself the evil that is born in it, and so reconciling itself with and in itself. This, in fact, is the by-path Hegel would lure us into; but this temptation must be resisted. It is meaningless to say of being that it redeems itself, since being is neither in need of, nor capable of, redemption until it has become conscious of itself; in other words, until it has become self-conscious man, with a morally striving but at the same time a stumbling will. Being can be redeemed only in the form of finite and sinful man, and in this form only through divine love descending to man.

We must be vigilantly opposed to all theosophical and gnostic theories of an instability and duality in the Godhead, or of events related to a development of God to be constructed only by speculative effort. Under the guise of conceptual ideas these schemes introduce into thought imaginative elements which seemingly explain difficulties of thought but which are neither really demonstrative in



a logical sense nor correspond to the logic of heart and religion. God does not redeem Himself, since He does not sin; He redeems man. No speculation, no self-styled profundity can go deeper.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, every attempt along these lines falsifies the truth of moral experience by injecting, in its place, unexperienceable and factitious processes into the Being of God which contribute in nowise to rendering conceivable that redemption by divine love announced by Jesus. Thought cannot surpass the message of revelation nor substitute conceptual ideas for its mystical images. God, the living God, is not a logical idea nor can he be grasped thereby. Precisely because He is not such an idea can He appear in the human heart, and can this heart cleave to Him.

The language of imagination is originally the language of the human heart. God, therefore, as the object of imagination is the God of the heart; He is not a principle that explains the phenomena of the world but the living God who speaks to the soul. Not as Creator, but as Redeemer, He reveals the inward soul of Himself. He is, as the Gospel of St. John says, love. He is not that thinking spirit outside the world and outside the human heart which Aristotle called god. He is not the first mover of the physical phenomena, but the mover of the soul. He is to be found in the depth of the self; and if speculation is challenged to conceive of Him, then He must be grasped as the ideal self.

There are two ways of experiencing this self: the human way of striving after the ideal, and the divine way of appearing in human imagination as a reality. Revealing imagination proceeds from the Creator outside the world through the fall of man to the Redeemer within the

<sup>2</sup> The deliberate attempt to go deeper can be found in both old and new gnostic systems, e.g., in those of Schelling and Hegel.

human self. To be sure, this phrase "within" must be qualified. It means that the human soul must turn inwards to meet Him, and not that it possesses Him as a possibility of its own existence in its own essence or nature. God, as the Redeemer, is not merely an indwelling God. He transcends the limits of man; not as the image of the Creator transcends the outer world, but He transcends the inner center of man, where conscience abides and his love of God and longing for God. In this sense God is spirit, as St. John says. Man cannot reach his own center, because he, as self, is never at the end of his task of realizing himself. He is always in the making. But God is his end; reaching Him he reaches beyond his own limits but, at the same time, he finds his own center: the self of his self, the soul of his soul. And this inward God is the center of the world also, the Creator and the Lawgiver and the Ruler of nature and of man.

God does not directly govern history, for history originates from the activity of man's freedom. In the historic world the conflict between God and man is not yet settled, and can never be settled, because the very concept of history presupposes the loss of paradise as the state of man. Living in this world man cannot live in peaceful unity with nature, God, and his fellow-men; never perfect, he is doomed to strive for perfection and to fail in this endeavor over and over again. *History is the narrative of the actions and the destiny of sinful man.* Therefore, many antinomies lurk within the concept of history, one of them opposing God's providence and man's freedom, another God's omnipotence and man's sin. These antinomies cannot be resolved by or within history, for they constitute the preconditions of the historical life. Consequently no historical knowledge whatsoever can produce or refute faith; on the contrary, faith necessarily holds primacy over all his-

torical knowledge. No historical realism can be or become a religious realism. Religion transcends the historical compass and historical knowledge. There is a realm beyond history; the devout man participates in this realm in so far as he participates in the revelation of God.

But is not Jesus a historical personality? Did not his life and death take place under historical circumstances within a historical environment? Is not the Christian religion (in contrast to mythological cults) a historical religion, and consequently the Christian faith a faith based on historical antecedents? Although the first questions have to be answered in the affirmative, the last question nevertheless must be denied. If history is the record of man's actions and destiny, if history is the realm in which sinful man strives and only partially accomplishes his mission, then God cannot enter the scene as a historical person. In so far as He enters history, He appears, not in the guise of a historical figure, but in the fashion of a miraculous event, like the appearance in the burning bush or on Mount Sinai. Religious faith accordingly cannot be founded upon historical facts and historical knowledge, nor can the truth of faith be the truth about historical incidents.

From the historical point of view a reconciliation between God and man is impossible, the resurrection of Christ is a myth like other myths, and the remission of sin is an article of a creed. The historian, as such, cannot decide on the truth of such imaginative contents of faith; his faith may be implicated when he reports the historical fact that men at certain times have accepted these events as true. But the historical fact is not the kind of fact which he believes. It may be freely admitted that a historian who shares the belief he records is more likely to ascertain the historical truth than an unbeliever. Is a historian of

art who does not appreciate art competent to estimate the value of works of art? But this does not demonstrate that religious faith is a faith in historical facts. On the contrary, it demonstrates that faith rules supreme over historical facts and historical knowledge.

One must have faith to discern the meaning of historical facts. This meaning is not a historical meaning but a meaning open to faith alone. On the other hand, the connection between faith and historical knowledge must not be overemphasized. We can investigate the historical development of religions and creeds which are foreign to us and which we reject. Our own faith similarly may be a disturbing factor in investigating historical matters, because the affections of the heart may blind the eyes and render them faulty organs. These reflections serve again to confirm the disparity between historical knowledge and religious faith.

This faith is engrossed in the inner truth of images which interpret the divine mystery and the mystery of man. It is engaged in the meaning of those images, not in the actuality of historic occurrences. There is an analogy between the standpoint of the pious servant who longs to possess God and the standpoint of the thinker who quests after the truth. Neither are immediately interested in the past in so far as it is the past, while the interest of the historian concerns strictly the question of what has happened in the past. As the thinker turns to the schools of former generations, not to search out what was then taught but to glean what is true from Plato or Aristotle, what he can avail himself of and use to build a new system according to his own judgment and insight; so the man of faith betakes himself to the words and deeds reported in Scripture to learn not what happened in a part of Asia some two thousand years ago, but how to

possess God and to overcome the contradictions of life and to gain peace for his soul. There is, further, a characteristic difference between the thinker and the religious man, resting on the difference between philosophy and religion. Thought seeks a truth that is impersonal and expressed by means of universal concepts, a truth similar in this respect to that sought by the mathematician and physicist, even though the problems involved pertain to the religious sphere, while religion seeks and attains a truth which affects the seeker personally. The words and deeds of the past have, therefore, still less an exclusively historical meaning to him than have the philosophies of the past to the thinker.

The content of faith has a power over heart and life, over the most inward province of the self where its mystery is intuited. As the self is primary in any historical knowledge (for no knowledge is possible without a knowing self), so life and faith are equally primary. History surveys life in an objective and contemplative manner, thus denaturalizing it, for the very core of life is personal activity. The historical world appears in the light of the historian as an objective world, like nature under the analysis of the physical sciences. History deals with circumstances, persons, facts, and deeds belonging to the past and to the past only. Faith, on the contrary, takes the events and deeds of the past as if they belonged to the present, because the meaning of them is as immediately important today as it was then. This meaning is not the property of the past at all, although the imaginative form in which it appears has or may have an historical aspect. He who mistakes the truth seized by faith for the truth set forth by historical investigation has never experienced the real meaning of faith. The meaning of the facts a believer accepts impinges upon him as words per-

sonally uttered by his father, mother, or his friend, and as paramount in his personal life.

The truth of faith does not answer the question whether those events have happened in an objective sense; but the question alone what meaning they have and what influence they exercise over personal life. It is impossible indeed to separate the occurrences and their meaning: it is their *meaning* that *occurs*. A religious occurrence is an interior one, one taking place first in the heart, in its innermost citadel where the mystery of God reveals itself.

This truth, though clothed in a historical garment and appearing at a historical moment in time, nevertheless is an eternal truth independent of time and historical surroundings. On the other hand, it is not timeless like the truth of mathematical propositions and physical equations, for it is a truth which engages the personal self. *It is the truth which overcomes all separations* between an object that is known and a subject that knows, between the self and the world, between essence and existence, between the universal and the individual: such is the *truth of faith* as opposed to the *truth of knowledge*. The truth of faith is much more certain than any truth found by historians and concerning the facts that happened in the past could possibly be. The faithful person is involved in this truth, and is a collaborator in the occurrence.

The story of the fall does not mean that at a certain historical or prehistorical moment this Eve plucked the fruit and this Adam consumed it, but rather that this taking and eating eternally happen—not in a timeless time, but at all times so long as men endure. All religious legends and episodes have this same meaning. They represent images which focus the light of ultimate truth. Since it is ultimate truth which is interpreted, you and I

are at stake as we read them; our life and destiny, our relation to the universal mystery are summoned for interpretation. *De te fabula narratur*. That does not imply that Jesus did not really live, that he did not really suffer and die. But it does follow that the eating of the fruit of the tree in Eden is as relevant to us as the sufferings, the death, and the resurrection of Christ. Not the historical fact of his life, but the mystical meaning of it is important to the devout. His resurrection, by every estimate, is the central image of the Christian faith.

A historical truth bears no relation to personal guilt and destiny, to moral worth and inner peace in the sense of the truth of faith. One binds oneself by faith, but one can remain neutral and indifferent in historical affairs. Faith and salvation, therefore, cannot be founded on historical facts.<sup>3</sup> Instead history requires illumination by the torch of faith, if it is to be envisaged as the realm wherein sinful man strives and suffers and acts. Faith has utter primacy over historical knowledge. Faith interprets the historical world as it interprets the mystery of man and of God. That is the reason man has established the chronology of the Christian era on the basis of the birth date of Jesus, instead of fitting this date in a previously ordered chronology. Jesus was not born within an historical era; instead historical time has been generated by his advent. Revolutions which have propagated new forms of faith, like the French Revolution or contemporary Fascism, have aimed to introduce new chronologies; the Jews have retained their own system, a scheme consistent with their faith. Faith does not depend on history; rather history is determined by faith. Faith is the core and the

<sup>3</sup> Fichte says the historical does not bring salvation; this is true, but it must be added: The metaphysical also does not bring salvation. What brings salvation is rather the original, undivided unity of the historical and the metaphysical: *the content of a living faith*.

basis of man's consciousness, therefore, it must needs predominate in all matters pertaining thereto.

There is a kind of religious historical knowledge, if we so describe immersion in those stories and images which form the content of the living faith. But faith itself is no historical knowledge, although it is accompanied by such a process. Faith is life, its burning, vital center. If faith ceases to be life, *then* it fades and cools into mere historical knowledge. But are the religious stories not at least partly historical, you may ask? Is not a historical element embedded in religious faith? Is not the Bible partly biblical history which traces the historical development of the Israelites? That cannot be denied. But what makes this history *biblical* and an integral part of faith is not its historical element, but precisely its superhistorical significance. It is true that it is the peculiar nature of biblical faith to be closely connected with history, and that the biblical God is not, like the gods of the pagan mythology, a product of poetical imagination. He is instead a God of history, a God who enters the real world wherein we live, whose actions are inseparably connected with the historical fate of the chosen people. But this is correct only in so far as the concept of history is no longer taken in the exclusive sense of an objective record of past human life.

It cannot be maintained that the deeds and words of God, as recounted in the Bible, are historical in this scientific sense; they are as little historical as the account of Creation or the fall of man. If we take biblical history as history in the literal (secular) sense, then the part God plays loses its biblical affiliations entirely and can no longer impress our mystical intuition and our religious faith. His role ceases to be the action of God; instead it is degraded into the record of the beliefs which a certain



historical people had concerning God, and his relation to their experiences. This people ceases to be the chosen people, instead it becomes the people that believed themselves to be the chosen people. The Bible degenerates into a historical document detailing the manner in which the Israelites experienced their fortunes, believing them given by their God, and in which they carried out or neglected to carry out, the commandments of this God. In other words, our interest in the Bible becomes historical, precisely when we no longer retain our faith. The God who reveals Himself in the Bible becomes a god among other gods, and the Christian religion becomes one religion among many.

The descent of God upon the stage of history is no historical occurrence. Instead, history ceases thereupon to be history in the proper (secular) sense of the word. It becomes sacred and holy, that is "biblical history," as soon as God takes a hand in it. If we read biblical history with the eyes of faith we do not look upon it with the eyes of an historian or with his interest. The Bible does not teach history, it teaches revelation of God in an inner development associated with the development of a people that appears as elect in the light of that revelation.

This is even more obvious in the coming of Jesus Christ, whose personal life has not been treated by any historian as purely a historical event. (Those who essayed to treat it in this fashion falsified it and destroyed the superhistorical meaning it has in the coherent scheme of revelation.) There are no genuine historical testimonies for his life and death, because the whole sphere in which he acted and suffered was *not the historical sphere* but that of *immediate life*. To be sure, the historical time in which he lived and preached could not have been any other time; but the religious truth revealed by him does

not depend on the historical view in any way. Those circumstances—the political and social background of Palestine—are a relatively unimportant setting for his divine message and mystical sacrifice. Of course, the fact that he lived and preached just at this moment of European history is in itself of the greatest historical moment, but the historical occasion contributes not a mite to the religious importance of his person and career.

History is wrought by the appearance of Jesus. No greater historical revolution has ever occurred, but his historical effect is not the religious significance of his advent. Even the skeptical or irreligious observer of European history must admit the historical weight of Jesus Christ although he will deny the religious meaning of his revelation. Faith is not historical knowledge; faith does not reside in the reality of such events or deeds as could possibly become the object of historical research.

Faith is life and concerns the substance and the truth of life. Life is not history although history deals with a certain sector of life from a restricted point of view. Faith is the innermost essence of life, for man is man because he touches the universal divine mystery. Faith is devotion to this mystery as conveyed by divine imagination in accordance with our moral experience and with our ontological, epistemological, and ethical self-reflection. But, though consistent with it, faith overleaps the boundary line of philosophic thought; therefore, its truth transcends, and cannot be proved by, any rational means. All controversies as to whether we are entitled or even obliged to obey the commandments of the biblical God, whether or not we are justified in believing that He is the true and only God and that the imagination which reveals His word and will is the language of His own revelation cannot be arbitrated by reason, cannot be compounded by historical or

by any other arguments. The majesty of God neither requires nor permits logical pressure to convince the human heart. God enters the heart whenever it pleases Him to do so. But, though no human intellect will ever suffice to prove the existence of God and to substitute knowledge for faith, so no human mind will ever avail to refute His existence or to fabricate a religion out of the materials of philosophic reflections. Faith holds final sway in the kingdom of the spirit.

This primacy is a consequence of the primacy of God over man. Expressed in ontological terms this primacy means the superiority and the victory of being over not-being, or of infinity over finitude. This victory, though postulated by the ontological precedence of being and infinity, can nevertheless not be won by means of ontological thought, as Hegel erroneously believed. The antinomy between being and not-being, the infinite and the finite, cannot be solved through dialectical artifice. Even in the system of Hegel the solution is not conclusive since the transition from logic to the philosophy of nature proves that the logic is not self-sufficient. It follows that a logical solution of the antinomies is impossible. These antinomies cannot be eliminated in any philosophic system whatsoever, and neither theoretical (speculative) nor practical (moral) reason can achieve this culmination. Both types of reason are based upon the opposition between the given and the goal, between the real and the ideal, and need this opposition in order to proceed. Both are, therefore, faculties of finite man. Not-being in the field of theoretical reason erupts as *error*, in the field of moral reason as moral *evil*. Human understanding and thought can never rid itself completely of error. Human will can never completely overcome evil.

The victory of being over not-being, which is at the

same time the victory of truth over error and of good over evil, cannot be brought about by human reason and activity. But it is accomplished by the grace of God. This triumph is the only one which is in accordance with the demands of reason, though reason cannot attain it. The "logic of the heart" discloses that the victory of truth and good can nowise be won but by faith. Faith claims primacy therefore in the ontological as well as in the moral field. God alone is pure being, man is a mixture of being and not-being, of truth and error, of good and evil. God alone can assist man to attain pure being, but not by means of man's understanding or will. They are but human, salvation is the reward of faith. The heart can devote itself to God and God shall dwell therein, and make His abiding place where faith abides.

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